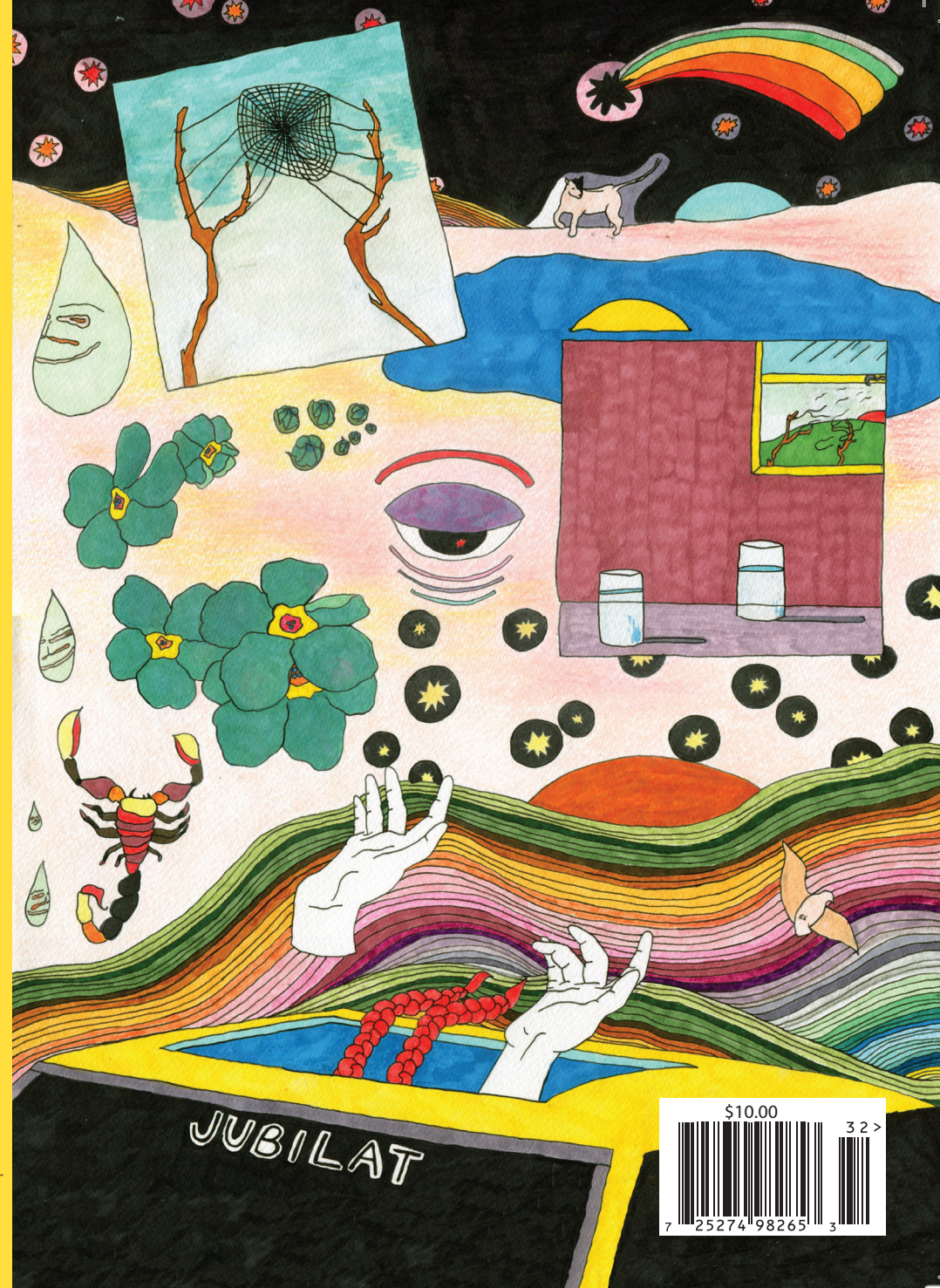


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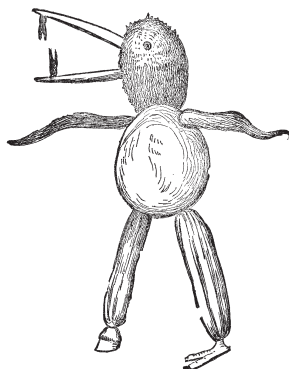


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Thank you.

IN MEMORIAM



JOHN ASHBERY

1927-2017

HOW CRUSHED WE WERE ON THE WAY TO COMRADERIE

Holly Amos

the light still flooding
 a sidewalk where we did not hold hands
signed a petition

We brought so many eyes aglow & growing
No stems no thistles
 all burst

The way your forehead later rubbed mine
& I was left there gloriously

When the large group of men came my instinct
was to brace until I understood the evening so late and bugs

their walking was moving them
 into each other's beauty
toward a lake that feels unbound & we know it's not true

They said hello and we saw each other
They said we're wearing shorts
& we saw

An unlocked bike
between us
 and you were still standing and in so many places

our dogs were sleeping and waiting
for everyone to come home we are lucky
to be home

LOOK ME IN THE FACE: THE JOYFUL MYSTERIES

Christian Bancroft

Isn't it enough just to materialize
into anything; at most, into a human?

To have survived into life
fleshed with the same elements
that compose soil and white dwarf?

Every day devotion hums
within my skin.

And you, Lord, forged my tongue,
which could prostrate you in defiance,
or reap every photon of light
from you, to soak into my pores.

You know that I live in flux
between my beauty, pain, and embarrassment.

Look me in the face: not as breeze or fire.

EVERY GIFT INVOLVES A SACRIFICE: THE SORROWFUL MYSTERIES

I've woken up on ten thousand days.
They don't justify a man
being nailed to beams.
Every gift involves a sacrifice.
I'm not even worth the sacrifice
the light makes in its variations of blue
telling me it's dawn or dusk.
What I am, the bungling precipitando
of hands conducting
the wrecked refrain of lungs.
To have veins so full of existence
once, only once. Then fail.
My widowed skin left. My soul ferried
to the expanses.

SURFACE

Elizabeth Breese

Not up. The coming *on* of flowers like a fever
on the surface of the earth: a purple syndrome.
The woman emphasized it to signal
her relationship with the dirt was different
and better, that she monitored it like the body
of a good friend. Cold-handed grief. Fattened
happiness. I did not like her, but was like her:
another of nature's patterns which is beautiful
after someone goes to great lengths to explain
math is everywhere. The ear. The hurricane.
The pinecone spirals violet-brown in both directions,
and the number of times it does each (clock,
counter) will be neighbors in the magical sequence.
It adds up, all the magic, which is to say it's surface
that compels us: not the lavender veil, but its length.
Does it touch the ground?

LIONESS

Colleen Louise Barry



FRAGILE

WATCH
IF ITS CARM H

I DESERVE
TO SURVIVE

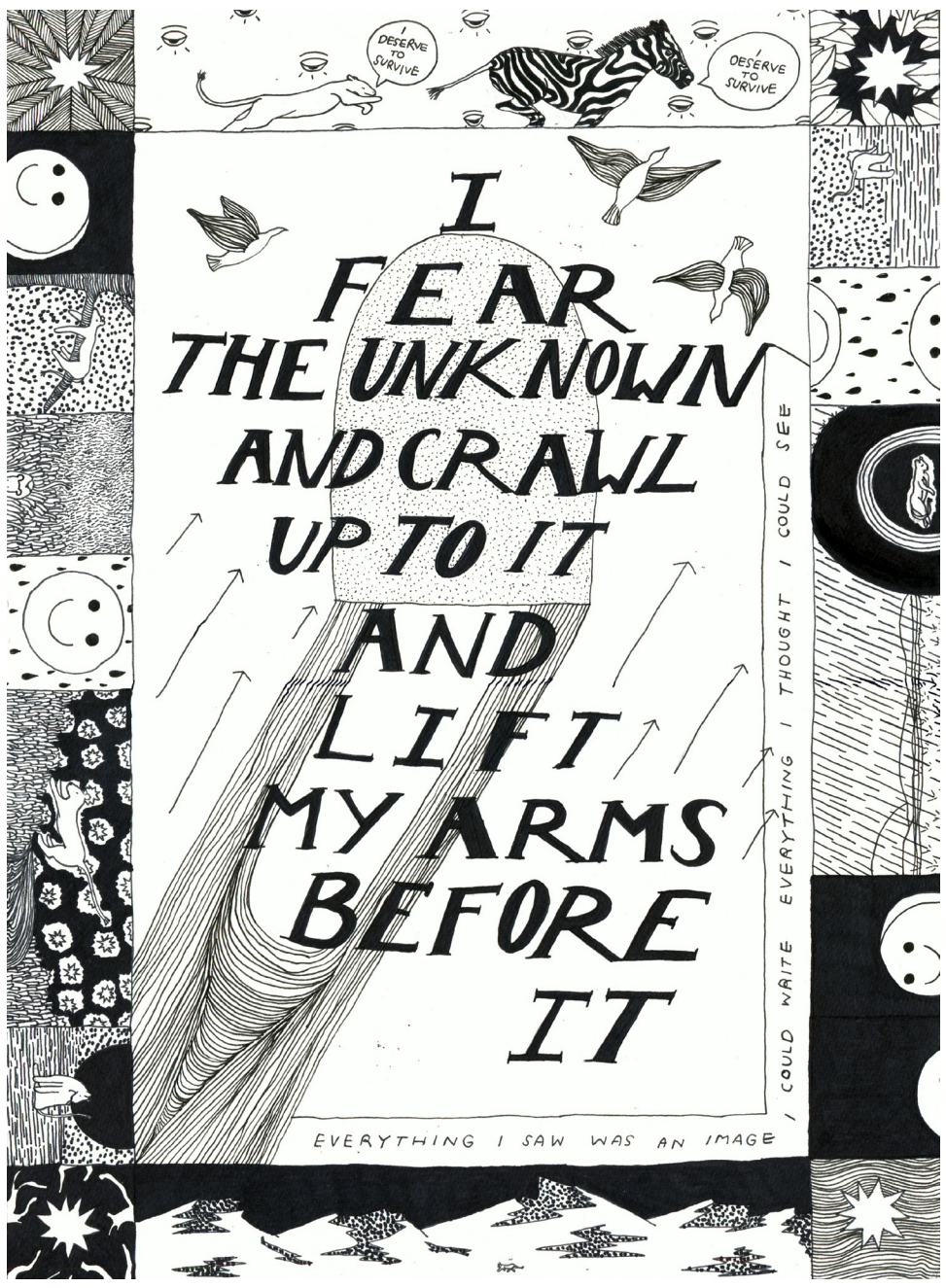
LIONESS

EVERYTHING I SAW WAS AN IMAGE
I COULD WRITE
EVERYTHING I THOUGHT I COULD SEE
THE NEXT YEAR WOMEN IN THE MIRROR
LAST MONTH I DESERVE TO SURVIVE
IS IT A CRIMINAL MATH DOES IT TELL
CARTOON TIME
I FEAR THE UNKNOWN
AND CRAWL UP TO IT
AND LIFT MY ARMS BEFORE IT

GO TO
ON
TIME

DOES
IT
TE

3



**I
FEAR
THE UNKNOWN
AND CRAWL
UP TO IT
AND
LIFT
MY ARMS
BEFORE
IT**

EVERYTHING I SAW WAS AN IMAGE

I COULD WAIT EVERYTHING I THOUGHT I COULD SEE

PANTOGLOTTISM

Peter Burzynski

Tension is feral life is lived in many tiny boxes (they are all the same
size) so you know don't try and stack 'em in inside of
each other. When I write other I start to write orphan.
I don't think I have any clarifications. Tension is feral
OH NO! There's a mirror! Is a massage a sexy type of mirage?
We're not relevant YET we laconic
in the bar light Don't Stop Now don't push that tell me what to do
please explain me please choose an option other than autopsy
duplicate/replicate/inebriate Pick. Kinko's don't ask questions.
Write me
a poem about fetal disposition(s) posit disciplines &&&
the grand Eastern tradition of their omission deletion (graves glisten)!

We got mobility in the city with bells are we used up?
Please thank you, my friend my friend.
If there's a crisis just let me know.

I'm very good at finding things.

I'm a poet let's go at it.

S_____ said that. She's brilliant. We brilliant, we real cool.

You only get one chance at negative capability. We are capable.

Allusions are like blasphemies rhapsodic calls.

Remember tension— tension is feral. Dialogues

imply simultaneity. This is speech. I hope you're listening.

SEEING BELIEVING

blank stares of graves	many of them	stacked	categorized
(cauterized)	stump rolex	tournoiuet)	
rows of teeth	lips smacking	the tightly accordioned	rolodex blank of
an iris	look	look at me	look
you win some	you lose	I prepared my tongue	I am
a human	being	is non-being	other/another
I stroke the blankness of your chest	I measure	the space between each rib	
I find them	satisfactory	I find you	a lost creature (that poor
creature)	I own your factory	smell your smell	my own olfactory
dingy	stunted	heartfull	stillborn
I used to	know you better	I used to love you	before the war

ACRE, HEATHER, SQUARE

Adam Clay

On one side
of the metaphor
you find a house
while on the other,
the view remains blocked
from sight, eyes pushed
into another sense
of light. Go on. Ask
the question of yesterday
in the light of today.
Like describing
an empty field with
only three words,
there's no point
in hovering over
absence so directly.
Instead, clouds appear
casting shadows,
and the question
becomes not how
to describe the field
but rather is the field
now empty? No rain.
The clouds fragment
off into layers of blue air.

FINDING YOURSELF IN A MUSEUM GALLERY

To match the background
the eye destroys the foreground,
develops the idea of afternoon
toward an evening, calmly
wrecked (yet slowly) into a form
the mind eventually recognizes
until sleep. A blue sky blooms
unreal—

it needs watering you'd like
to think but it doesn't
wash away its memory so easily,
as simple as time's gravel
wearing down itself
so as to recognize your face
on a foreign wall is to recognize
a thought you never had.

This is an experience
everyone will have at least
once in their lifetime, maybe
twice. What to do with
the moments that dumbfound
us with awe? No removal
or distance is enough to tear
the sky into sense
so you become part of it
for a moment, the child
with the face of an animal
walking away from the viewer

toward the place where all lines
go, a sharp emphatic point, the gray
thunder of everyone's last thought.

HAT

Justin Cox

hat received as
parting gift that
plunges cleft
so roaring and consuming and loud
that had
what was it?

taken off the
engine lay before
nose to catalog
not secrets so much as
what knew about that had what beginning had

cried for that didn't that
dashboard that nothing that
understood part of the plane not human

the big split
that wanted to split
what judge called formal
that leaned over what
caring that nothing said that nothing

what's bothering
what continued
at the countryside
was a hatchet
that hokey hatchet

had something thin that
felt what hot hate felt for
not speaking and
put the hatchet on
that tenderness

THIS MY MOUTH

lord the corridor the refrigerator
lord something to look at
something to hear
the refrigerator lord
stands there
running
perfect lord
incomplete, perfect

lord the fridge stands warm and perfect
heat blows from a vent
dust collects head high and lord
lord the deep sound of the fridge

refrigeration
lord
the breathing into it
lord I tried and left
and found again
lord it

sounded in the fat
the thunk and thistle of it
sounded on my limbs
lord the window
lord the path from room to room
lord the crumbs the birds in motion
lord the sound of gum as it rests under desk

TIPPING POINT PRAYER

Nick Demske

The shooting stars all blow their brains out.
Dumb. Stupid stars. Their thoughts a Borealis are.
I'm praying that the game gets rained out

Cause otherwise a slaughter shall there be. Hanged out
To dry, rain-drunk my jersey drips. I snort the scar
Dust from the shooting stars which blow their brains out

Galaxy-wide. The game is tied and hanged out
In the open. Make we an example of it out, high above the public
square.
I'm praying that the game gets rained out

So hard we'll have to bang out
An Ark before sundown. Cause that there's
When the shooting starts, the blow-their-brains-out

Rooting for opposing teams. I sings this slangmouth
Anthem national like a rainbow of brainblow smear
'Cross the sky. That the game gets rained out

Should not surprise us as an ending. I'm all sanged out
About climate change doubt. I'm sorry, Atmosphere.
The shooting stars all blow their brains out.
I'm just praying that the game gets rained out.

EVERYTHING GONE CHESHIRE IN A DARKNESS

Russell Dillon

You, my love, proposing: the small hole into your brain, the pupil, into some darkness, that's what you called it, your "brain darkness," and it struck me, how true and how dark and how actual that is, simply, and do you have it, truly, those shadows? Later, you would joke about my eating habits, saying, "I wonder what your pancreas is thinking in there?" to which I replied, "Probably how dark it is." and you laughed and some hole in me closed a little, upon a darkness that is no less present, but contained in that moment. Our total attentions in one small room where we try at quiet, and then I think of a woman I'd seen earlier on the street, crouched beside a store window talking to a cat on the other side, saying, "I have to go, but do you know how much I love you?" and the cat, in its belly-up nonchalance half-ignoring explained back, "When no one is looking, I speak sternly with the mice. I tell them of the woman who loves me in my indifference, while no one thinks of them save the second they scurry across one's path, so get shuffling little vermin. Being unnoticed is how we are absorbed into a disappear." And then you stir a little and take me from this thought, and when you ask me to turn out the light, I say, "Of course," and I do, and in that dark I see you clearer than ever, pressing back against it, pressing into me, like the wind rising up to press now against the window, making new noise in a world where it had previously not considered its own, nor its shadows.

TO BELIEVE IN THE RISE, YOU MUST HAVE PROOF OF THE FALL

The light gestures again at a longing
for delay. So beautiful, this morning,
like we can almost forget the murders
that have made it possible. Here, in my
existence, I distort landscape by breathing.
The history of a crayon melted into the seat
of a car living on and on like a family built
to ruin each other. Delicate. The single-
atom wrecking ball inside all of us, asleep.
The dumb heart flaunting its density,
beating so hard the ventricles break
into separate rooms. I have faith
that my spine is an ellipsis growing
inward from my tongue, tying me to a more
important silence. I distrust the room
full of injured feet while the band plays on.
The face we never got to see stares back
at me from every spill, much like the way
your body in a certain light became my favorite
variety of costume, and haunts on as such.
Now, I drag my hand along the full-length mirror
thinking how paint can bend a corner indifferent
to our noticing, and attempt to claim that
backside image, the slink and shadow music
I conjure belief in. I catalog this with the belief
that when I lay down in the road, I become traffic.
Like the belief in the fat, furry legs of a bee
each candle is required to hold, regardless
of the horrible wind every beating wing must make.

IN A PREVIOUS LIFE I WAS A HOPSCOTCH ENTHUSIAST

Ryan Downum

Before that, a small houseplant kept
on the shelf above a kitchen sink.
Here is the sound water makes
in a dream. One time seeing a ghost may or may
not mean you are being haunted.
What do you say to comfort a person being haunted?
A house being haunted?
Inside houses are portraits of lanterns.
There are lonely lighthouses scattered across
lonely shores. Don't be nervous.
To avoid humility, use chalk.

WHEN APPROACHING A CLEARING OF LIGHT

I was born during a frantic migration
nowhere. The situation one only
cacti can figure out.

The situation one now deemed unsolvable
by another moon. We invent a new language
for birds and keep ourselves
occupied by constantly checking each other's
mailboxes. Someone walks up to me
and says, *The sun will disappear for two minutes.*

Now we must invent a new language
for the dark. This is a much sadder endeavor
than one realizes. There are many mistakes.
There are many mistakes. And when the dark wants
to be known by another name,
we must all sleep next to the river.

We must pull every vibrating star
from the sad sky to place inside our
ribcages. Perhaps there are better ways
to approach meaninglessness. Perhaps being lonely
is okay if one talks to trees every year
for the rest of one's life. I am not trying to be brave.
I am merely trying to say the right things as
over and over the sky hums backwards.

GET ON MY BUS

Sadie Dupuis

Does coming over a bridge do that to you too
The imperative need to jump on down
A geodesic lethal distance
Even when the water below is filled
With adorable baby ducks

Must we conflate our tragic selves
With little little ducks

Get on my mental bus with me
It's a slow bus, let's name
The many crystalline caggles
It passes upon

And perilous like
Human smell on the shirt of a gone human
Or laundered smell on the shirt
Of a gone human
Where the chemicals take the place of
A smell you really loved

The birds scatter among
The real world and its craggy brains
Comprised of scroggy ice it's like
A prank to try and cross
But we prank on
We do you're on
My bus you're on my bus with me

Mentality
We're holding on our breaths
Looking up as we overdo it

Loping screwily at the cross of this
Too-cruel, cruel, cruel height

SEND FOR ME A LIL SOMETHIN

Look down from my temporary window
At two dead birds, sweetly
How suited these deados are
For the fall into love

Do the dead “meet cute”

These pigeons warm my filthyyy sentiments
I have often identified with
Crap on a city street
Crying at a solitary shoe
Particularly, O me
I’m morbid and selfishly so
To project my limited moral framework
On whatever crap I see
With sensitivity
To an aura of aloneness

And when I think of you
I think of you

The mites come over my birdie flesh
Or the mites crawl over
My one remaining mighty feather
The warmth of dead me wholly crawling with love

Whatever (a love can be)
When I think of you
It is like getting something dead in the mail

Or two dead things in the mail
Two things many times over multiplied and approaching
Infinity, when I think of you
I think the death of a few

Arresting somehow
To this infinite heart

BE A GOOD HORSE

You gotta have a double-big heart. To let your muscles glisten. To be a companion to sisters everywhere. Fall asleep quickly in the boxes you find yourself inside. Not too picky about what's in the nosebag.

You oughta be happy. To be happy with teeth out. To let your hair glisten.

Sometimes they shoot you don't they. But you're a machine.

Somebody wished for you as a kid and cleaned out a whole barn for you. You were a total asshole of a horse. And that kid believed in love when she groomed you but afterward she felt very detached.

A horse can live a happy life. Sometimes they go to the cops. Sometimes they intimidate crowds. That's the public purpose of a horse. But no horse stuff for me. Everybody gets drunk in a barn in the end.

THE OLD CAT DIED AND A NEW ONE STARTED SHOWING UP

I.

The generation was wire and painted wood. It was lit jaggedly; it was behind glass. From the windows women in heels eyeing heels. I want to be among the generation too. The reason I stopped talking to you. And replaced your support with a wire support.

It's a gentlemen's generation. Behind neon we get battered in the head, bartering for the life of magic. That's a sacrificial lamp alright, and when it's out this whole world of trash material goes out, too. It angles up to a plaster god, but all the gods are trash material too, cartoon pixels in a sky of millions, stroked out.

But it doesn't matter about celebrity death. I am more concerned by a meal that falls short of its mouthfeel. The incomprehensible stare of an eve obsessed with setting. Night, was there ever such a false origin? A red lip that feigns at bloodwetness, a backcrawl through the shadows of the self. Now tell me, was there ever something so false as the night?

You can only kill your sentimental self. I want to and do too get turned on by the drug of the sun, and my daily passage leaves brighting trails of chalks, like cakestand superdrugs.

II.

Building a ladder out of something tough, like licking away at shaved ice to make a shape. What is it to enter a room of ladders? To climb up and feel your body sliced between the ground and the ceiling? You are bisected always into your worst person and your best person, or even worse you are always seeing distortions in a room of mirrors.

Even in plastic, even as a monochrome, reflected back and forth across fields of stars and spit and grain, I must lose sight of this sentimental self.

Cherry picking the lifestyle of a mime, indulging the motions of others only to autogenerate my own Athenian children. How do you pass through the mirror when you only get as close as your cheeks, blushing?

From far away a mirror is just like glass, and from very very close—you breathe against it—there is a certain noise in your throat—that like a lion—and it makes steam, and how nicely it blurs you.

III.

Please watch your feet on the rainbow. A lift is available if you are at all unsure. Please watch your feet at the sun. Please watch your shoes on the ceiling.

We play a game in which wearing your glasses I attempt to learn something new. But in the end we are both just blind, and sad enough to be amused.

IV.

A broken glass is trash, a punching bag, a rip, a leaked frequency. The striated scales of color—little threads woven shamanic toward the rain—I welcome all this ugliness.

The face of the mirror—with the eyes cut out—is the face you can't trust. A sound of black glitterati. What you hang your outward self upon and with. The fadings of dirt, dust, sun, dead moths.

And it all needs an outlet nowadays.

A suit made of tinfoil. A suit made of space. A tin man, reflecting himself.

V.

All day I sit on a photo of your face. I have pasted it here. And pretty soon I am pasted too. Your face in me and of me and on me upon me around me. Pretty soon there's nowhere to go but under.

What if I'd set someone else here, face down?

VI.

You say to be good and climb things, in a voice of steel, corroding. You balance yourself precariously and voice your own factory. Shooting polythene guns of secrete is the addiction you blush around now.

Strings which dance and dissect impossibly—lost in the zero shadow. The dulled nails laid out across the nest. The eggs an inverse, wormy, hatching into nothing into shadows into selves.

You don't believe that a mirror is so beautiful, or its drawers of light. No, not as beautiful as the shadow of its frame. The reality is: all materials burn.

VII.

Tendrils out into a white sea. Plug the sea. Run along. Forget it. To the sea you're just one needle. Why ask the sea to wish upon you?

Why stain yourself with beauty, bruises, a name they stammer?

And leave the jellies shaking by the shore. Put light in your brain and

teeth and tongue. This mirror was sewn for the pain of the water the world wept.

VIII.

They use art to stave off their own blood. The sickest people I know are the nicest and most boring.

If you stay full of dull at the very least you stay.

IX.

Be inconsistent in the crashing of your mirror. Every similar crash is a trap.

When you crash you are just a wig of yourself.

Paint the whole militia white. Then dump away the remnants. Don't swell your heart on what you've covered up. It's only a circle...of uncovering...and covering... this sentimental heart. Always covered in its own bloody blood.

X.

In a game of bluff, everyone was neon. Getting caught in a diamond, caught in a constraint. A ravishing, a space filled. Stupid colors like blue quartz and salt glimmer. Stupid colors all of them.

Start the secrete—the beeswax—the thatch top, of branches, and heavy, and bruising—a space filled.

The last woman on a moon. A map washed through me. Watch the wind force things. And further study the forces holding you together.

XI.

I won't extinguish the stone room's fire. I don't plan on drying the thatchery. I'm simply not cleaning up. Or matting the woolen, these trees branched too punily to climb. And yet

—in my week of mystery silence I see the bigger picture—

lava, meteor, wool, and suspension, suspense. The city beneath the stones is always ready for more stones to fall. Everybody looks in the mirror and imagines something brutal but me. Me, I must be brutalized.

I DON'T WANT DIFFICULTY IN MY LIFE

So I have shut my brain off. I see a palm tree, and I see a palm tree. I see the sun and lie down in it. Things are easy with you until hardness is introduced. But look off; the distance. Just a warm tree jacketed by sun.

Again and again I produce a block of words containing no mysteries. Like a loose brick you find in a scrapyard and throw at a wall until it begins to crumb slightly into powder which dusts the weeds. Or hitting a glass with a glass at such a precise angle that a break is made cleanly.

You've never seen someone get aggressive with materials. Isn't it kind of cool. But it's only worthwhile to get aggressive with things you can hold in your hands.

IT'S NICE TO BE IN A WORLD WITH YOU

A mistake I made in the park was to love it too much, to close my eyes to the sun. So now I'm seeing shadow shapes and have been awake for my entire lifetime. I see the shadows of all the ways you can be in a park alone or with someone, and in the park with someone but alone. All kinds of shadows rushing out—a shadow that throws rocks at streams, at trees, at powerful trees and ugly trees, at every tree. That's one way to behave. One imagines the process by which rocks are placed throughout the world, appearing perfectly in rows, in stacks, with absolutely soft surfaces. Never mind how a shadow can transcend its dark flat realm and hold onto something big. Never mind how a shadow displaces the real. Never mind; there is more to a park than a tree and some rocks. There is more to a world. There are voices, there are sounds out shouting. And still there are ways you can be in a park, snubbing the noise that makes worlds. You carve homes out of silence. Warm and massive. I'm out in a world, okay? And even when called by the name of the shadow, it's rocks strewn around now, rocks and rocks and rocks.

SLENDERIZING MIRROR

Life as a project numbness would inspire me to slog through. But instead I am sitting out on an overpass with cannibal eyes. So what about art. So what about memory. And the role light plays in both. There are all kinds of metaphors better than light. Like asylums, or frottage, or towers of iron, futile beheadings, donating plasma.

I would like to build some kind of expanse and stretch across the whole thing. Or at least I'd like to handle my view of myself in profile. I would like to get numb in the sky and cope from there. You seem to dislike yourself a lot for someone who takes such caution with her health. Well do you think maybe that's part of my own punishment? To preserve a body that annoys me for as long as possible.

I can taste my own salty tears and they taste like tears for once. Is it disgusting to cry. To let your eyes get hugely glittering and animalistic. I forego metaphors from the realm of the fantastic. Fuck magic or promises. It is so basic to swear. But I swear I will be the best for you if I stop getting hung up on light at a slant.

THE CLAP

Must we always stand in such interminably dark locations. When we stand in the hot light we get rewarded for things we aren't even about to do. I'd like to do things with you and get cheered on. I'd like to applaud what is filthy and gross.

I read a story about a man who thinks something's wrong with his dick. So he squeezes it in front of a friend and a kind of a green pus comes out. I think that's neat and would like to applaud.

I'm not afraid of your body or any sludge it might produce. However I want to drain my body of everything inside it.

There are all kinds of phobias, and there are all kinds of people who are phobic about the body. There are people so afraid of their own bodies they claw out their own eyes. But I'm not afraid and in fact I have never felt fear in my entire life.

I remember everything you ever told me and that's why I don't know anything about you.

I AM MOST ACTIVE AS A POET ON THE ROAD: AN INTERVIEW WITH SADIE DUPUIS

Both poet & multi-instrumentalist, Sadie Dupuis inhabits & explores a multitude of expressive spaces. She is the guitarist, lead vocalist, and lyricist for the critically acclaimed band, Speedy Ortiz. She has also released a solo album entitled *Sluggish* & collaborates with other artists under the moniker *Sad13*. Sadie Dupuis resides in Philadelphia. A collection of her poems is forthcoming from Mount Analogue.

jubilat Assistant Editor, John Goodhue, interviewed Dupuis during the summer of 2017.

JUBILAT: *Would you consider yourself first and foremost a poet or a musician? Is that even a valid question?*

SADIE DUPUIS: Most artists I know work in several media, but mostly they're capable of hierarchizing, or at least chronologizing, their efforts in each. Most broadly I'd qualify myself as an artist; I've spent time as a pop cultural critic, and an educator, and have dabbled in illustration, comics, painting, abstract dance, and acting. But poetry and music—specifically, songwriting—have been my most consistent creative practices.

I started playing music at a young age with piano lessons; I sang in classical children's choirs, too, touring internationally, so performing was a profession for me by the time I was in middle school. My mom got me an electric guitar and a four-track, so I was home recording punk songs on guitar around age 13, and I've played and toured in bands just about since then. I've never stopped writing and releasing music regularly. If I ever do, something's wrong.

Poetry came later for me and has been more intermittent. I remember winning a poetry contest in 3rd grade, for which the prize involved reading the poem in a commercial that aired nationwide at Loews Theaters. My mom and I snuck into a screening of *Clueless* so we could see me read, and bootleg it on a camcorder. But when I wrote for pleasure, I was writing fanfic, sci-fi, and comics. When I got to MIT as an undergrad, I realized I was much more interested in writing than I was in math, my intended major. But I was still largely unfamiliar with writing poetry, favoring non-fiction and specifically writing about music. I took a poetry workshop with Bill Corbett on a whim and became totally obsessed. I started submitting my work to contests and journals and showing up to readings around Boston. Even though I was pretty new to poetry, I liked the community surrounding it. So I transferred to Barnard to study poetry more seriously, and writing became my main focus for the next several years, especially once I started the MFA program at UMass Amherst.

Right around when I started that program, very much intending to spend all of my time writing and getting good at poetry, I started Speedy Ortiz. And since I'd spent so much of my life writing and recording music, it seemed silly not to follow the good opportunities that came to us. This basically meant I was teaching on Tuesdays and Thursdays and touring just about every other day of the week. It was exhausting; I wound up taking independent studies for my last semester, working from a tour van in Europe.

So being a musician has taken a lead in my life for the moment. You can't always control where your artistic efforts are going to take you, or which artistic endeavor is gonna take you there.

Do you feel it's necessary to strive for some balance (of time dedicated to, of output, of contemplation towards, etc.) between both roles?

If I get in a creative spree in one medium, I try to exploit it for as long as

possible, and go to another when I've hit writer's block. So I ping-pong between poetry and music, although music (or the invisible work that surrounds life as a touring musician—i.e. hours and hours a day on my e-mail) takes up most of my time at this point.

You can't conceive a child when you're already pregnant. Once I've finished making a record, I can't start writing songs or planning for the next one until the first record is out in the world. I don't mind that trait in myself; being project-oriented means every album can inhabit its own universe and possess a distinct personality. But I wrote a poetry manuscript in order to complete my MFA, and I've been so busy with music the past few years I haven't published any of it, really. I write poetry but I am very wary of collecting so many poems that I have a second book before I've set the first one out into the world. If I wrote a second book, I'm sure I'd hate the first. It's sad, right? To be scared of writing because you've already written?

I'd argue many people—especially those who make neither, as I've noted—like to think of poetry and music as synonymous, or at least complementary; sharing inherent qualities or roots that must confer with or support one another. Thoughts on this?

To me they're very different art forms, but I do think that developing strength in any creative discipline strengthens an artist overall—same as how football players practice ballet. I don't sit down and write a poem and then sometimes set music to it if I want it to be a song; the moment I start to create something, I know what form it'll end up in.

But my training as a musician has lent itself to my poetry, specifically in the timing and meter of a line, or just having a sense of the kinds of sounds that feel best to vocalize, whether that's singing or speaking. And being a poet has given me tics that make me an atypical songwriter. I absolutely hate to repeat lines and so I'm incapable of doing the "anthemic chorus"

thing. I often deviate from whatever pattern of rhyme I've set up. And if any word seems lazy or obvious, I can't in good conscience keep it in. Pop songwriting is therefore impossible. I stylize all my lyrics as prose poems, too, and sometimes print them as a chapbook. I'm usually proud of a song if I think the lyrics could stand on their own without music.

We often use the same verb—to write—both to describe the composing of a song as well as the penning of written word. Could you talk a little bit about how these two practices are similar or dissimilar for you? In other words, how has your definition of the so-called “writing process” been shaped by your respective dedications to songwriting and to poetry?

I compose music by recording and arranging on a computer, usually with many instruments. So being on tour, cramped in a van and sleeping on people's floors, makes it hard to find the physical space I need to write a new song. So I am most active as a poet on the road; I do a lot of my poetry writing off the computer, and I make it a priority to write poems (or notes for them) in museums, a practice that was first introduced to me by Saskia Hamilton.

Almost every day job I've had (at least beyond working on farms as a teenager) has involved writing in some way, and I have admittedly been very privileged to spend so much time near academia. Writing music used to feel like a reprieve from staring at words on a screen all day. Lyrics, for whatever reason, don't trip me out in this way, maybe because they're the last thing I approach when I write music. I sit down to write a song and enter some kind of fugue state; a couple hours later, the whole thing's there, music and lyrics.

How about performance? That also seems liked an action mutual to both...

For someone whose only source of income is performing, I am surprisingly

awkward onstage. When I turned 18, I started playing clubs in Boston and New York, and I became petrified of playing without having a drink or ten first. When touring became a full-time gig, I couldn't justify drinking every night, so I started dressing elaborately as a way to make myself more in-character, more comfortable in front of an audience. Hyper-femme costuming replaced alcohol, for the most part. But I doubt I could be in a band if I were only a singer; having a guitar in my hands (or, with Sad13, a guitar and a keyboard and a sampler and a vocal processor and a tambourine in my hands) makes me way more at ease.

Reading poems is more anxiety-producing for me, at this point; I still prefer a drink to do it and if I haven't had one, I'm shy and grumpy. Having a stack of papers in my hand is not nearly as calming as the task of manipulating an instrument. At some point I started writing poems that are more oriented towards readings, and those poems tend to be funnier and closer to prose. I tend to banter a bit more between poems than other poets I know, and that might be a side effect of performing music. Two current poets whose performances really impress me are Dorothea Lasky and Mark Leidner, for the ways their senses of humor captivate those who see them read.

Are all these questions essentially creating a false dichotomy?

There's this Elizabeth Willis line I like: "The difference between writing and painting is not always obvious."

I'm curious about your ideas regarding the task of poetry in politics. The lyrics of both Speedy Ortiz and Sad13 are often politically-situated. You've taken part in multiple benefit tours/gigs. Your dedication to various causes seems, at some level, embedded in the act of creating and sharing music. Do you find this to be the case with the act of writing poems? Is there the same space for it, at least for you?

A lot of the poets who have been the most meaningful to me address their identities and their politics very directly in their work—Audre Lorde, Michelle Tea, Lorna Dee Cervantes. I'm not great at writing lyrics from anything other than my own experience, and so it makes sense that feminist politics take a central space there. But I would argue that most of the good that I've done in the world as a musician has less to do with lyrics and more to do with redirecting money and resources. Apart from benefit tours and shows, and participating in fundraising compilations, it's important to hire people who are underrepresented in the music industry, whether that's our crew or our support acts or the people we work with behind the scenes on the business side. We've also updated our tour rider to mandate that safer space guidelines are posted by venues, that gender neutral bathrooms are available at our shows, and we distribute bystander intervention and de-escalation strategies on our merch table.

Regardless of whether my songs were political, I think I would be labeled a “political” musician, because I think “political” artists often arrive at that title thanks to the things they say and do outside of their work. I don't have the same cultural capital as a poet that I do as a musician, so it's less possible for me to leverage my work as a writer to do social good, to widen the net of those who are included, and to redirect money to get people paid who have been shut out. Women are also far less underrepresented in poetry than they are in music, especially rock. As a white woman I try to be conscientious of taking up space as an artist that would be better used by a woman of color, and I feel this in both poetry and in music.

It seems like both poetry and music—as with most everything these days—has been, at some level, commodified. Platitude aside, I'd love to hear your thoughts regarding the business-centric forces at work within these media. How do you choose to engage them? What ethos do you hold toward/against them?

Like I said before, I don't have the same cultural capital in poetry as I do in music, and have made very few strides within the world of poetry.

None of those strides have gotten me paid. I do readings if a friend asks; I publish a poem in an online journal if a friend asks. It's kind of similar to the way I spent my first decade as a songwriter, playing shows my friends organized and doing interviews for small blogs and zines only.

Becoming a full-time musician opened me up to a whole world of behind-the-scenes capitalism and mutual backscratching I'd never understood before. I am thankful that I came up playing basements and VFWs and learning about the ethics of touring from other punks. I'm not opposed to working with brands or corporations or playing age-restricted shows, because it's very hard to make a living wage from music and every little bit helps, but I won't work with companies whose ethics don't adhere to my own standards. I don't say yes to shows or festival or promotional appearances sponsored by brands that violate my personal ethics of what I will and won't buy.

To that end, I think voting for cultural change with personal money is important, and so when I buy books and records I mostly support women, queer people, and people of color, and buy from the artists directly when that's an option.

What about being a female working in these fields? In other words, how does not being a white, cis-gendered male play a role in your relationship to these art forms, either in the world of expression, the world of its industry, both?

In the same way that my artistic practices feed into one another, all of my intersecting identities—gender-ambivalent, binary-skeptical “woman” working primarily in a field designed for and created by men; queer and asexual person in a hetero partnership; person who has struggled with depression and anxiety for decades; atheist who was raised with both Judaism and Catholicism—shape how I see and interact with the world and therefore are inextricable from my work, which is a reaction to that world. Like I said before, I am wary of taking up too much space

as a white woman who is straight-passing and thin. But women are still such a minority in so much of audio work. It is hard for intersectional feminism not to feed your work when you have felt excluded, and when you have witnessed the even more rampantly systemic exclusion of your friends of color, and your friends who are trans, and your friends whose bodies aren't petite.

Would you name some musicians and/or poets who are currently “feeding” your work?

Music from Sammus, Aye Nako, Marika Hackman, Shintaro Sakamoto, and Downtown Boys has been inspiring me lately. Merritt K, Niina Pollari, Sampson Starkweather, Wendy Xu, Jenny Zhang and Mira Gonzalez have been some of my favorite poets lately. And I consider fiction, non-fiction and comics as influential as anything on my poems and songs: Renata Adler, Eve Babitz, Michelle Tea, Aline Crumb and Michael DeForge have been very important to me this year.

Does the act of inhabiting both the role of poet and musician ever propose difficult questions to you? If so, mind sharing a few?

If I do have any, they all tie in with imposter syndrome, and they're all going to sound whiny AF! I gather that my background as a poet has perhaps led to undue focus on lyrics in reviews of my band's music. Lyrics are sort of the last thing I dig into in a band's music, so it surprises me that they've become so central in Speedy Ortiz's critical attention. I'm like, I spent three hours getting that guitar tone and about 10 seconds thinking of those lyrics; it seems disproportionate. Meanwhile, anytime I do a poetry reading I'm like, "Oh, they don't really think my poems are good. I was just invited because they like my band." Insecure artists just can't win!

JUMPING FRENCHMEN OF MAINE [and other terms from *TABER'S* *CYCLOPEDIA MEDICAL DICTIONARY*]

Deborah Golub

apple packer's epistaxis
apple picker's disease
apple sorter's disease
artisan's cramp
athlete's foot
aviator's deafness
baker leg
baker's itch
barber's itch
bird breeder's lung
cavalryman's osteoma
chimney sweeps' cancer
clownism
coal worker's pneumoconiosis
cobbler's suture
dancing disease
dandy fever
diver's paralysis
farmer's lung
glover's suture
goldbeater's skin
grinders' phthisis
grocers' itch
hangman's fracture
housemaid's knee

jock itch
jogger's heel
milker's nodule
miner's nystagmus
miner's phthisis
mother liquor
musicomania
nudomania
obstetrician's hand
opera-glass hand
painters' colic
pianists' cramp
pigeon-breeder's disease
ping-pong fracture
pistol-shot pulse
poker back
ragsorters' disease
railway sickness
rider's painful patella
riders' bone
riders' sprain
Saturday-night arm
scrivener's palsy
seabather's eruption
seamstress's cramp
ship fever
shoemakers' cramp
silo-filler's disease
silver fork deformity
singer's node
smoker's tongue
soldier's patch

stonecutter's phthisis
straw itch
Sunday morning paralysis
surfer's knots
swimmer's ear
swimmer's itch
tailor's cramp
teacher's node
telegrapher's cramp
tennis elbow
trombone tongue
vagabond's disease
warehousemen's itch
washerwoman's itch
watchmaker's cramp
witch's milk
wool sorter's pneumonia
writer's cramp

from SELECTED NEW TEXTS ON THE ANTHROPOCENE: FOOD, NATURE, AND AGRICULTURE

Megan Grumbling

I.

From *The New Farmer's Almanac* Fall Migration Forecast

Larks, starlings, and swallows south of the Maritimes are expected to again winter in place. In some songbirds, Overwinter Restlessness Syndrome may result in heightened risk to livestock, jetports, and plate glass.

2.

From “*Man on Man*”: *A New Popular Anthropology of the Anthropocene* III.2: Food Practices

“Paleo”- and “Hunter/Gatherer”-themed restaurants and diets had long been in ascendance in “foodie” and health-conscious circles, and the trend now entered the supermarket; even some processed foods bore “Paleo-Safe” labels on their packaging.

A rarified foodie culture turned to ever more minimalist innovations. The renowned chef of Stockholm’s Soma began crafting variations on an actual stone soup, using a proprietary “gastro-chemical” process to extract digestible nutrients from lava stone and beach sand.

Other chefs and restaurateurs co-opted the art world's trending affinity for non-verbal culture. In some restaurants – Berlin's Istig, Portland's Here – occasional talk-free events, galvanized for diners by so-called “de-consumption artists,” evolved to a *raison d'être*: proprietors replaced restaurant names with symbols and did away with menus, while silence was strictly maintained throughout dining rooms, with no sounds permitted but hums, grunts, and clicks.

3.

From Cli-Fi and One-Offs: *The Anthropocene as Text*: “Food-fi”

Early in the period came the ascension of the popular literary and cinematic genre, “cli-fi,” that is, speculative narratives involving climate change, and, soon thereafter, its cousin: “food-fi.” Early iterations of food-fi grew out of the lavishly epicurean style known derisively, in some circles, as “food porn” (perhaps most trenchant as critique of the genre was Wright's parody *Rape of the Lox -- Sockeye. Crème Fraiche. Fennel Pollen. Microbeads. EVO.*) and later developed into several iterations of a more dystopian-minded speculative genre.

Works of food-fi included fantasies (and, later, satires) of newly created foods (lemons engineered with bioluminescence; “Pat-Protek” seeds, whose second-generation seeds were designed to self-destruct; the infamous corn strain spliced with quail DNA, ears of which ripened into a tiny yolk within each kernel) and the hormonal and neurological consequences of their consumption. Other narratives involved challenges to the successful harvest, delivery, or emergency decontamination of a population's food; mysteries and conspiracy-driven thrillers hinging on mass food-borne mortalities or morbidities; and procedurals depicting detection of non-normative behavior in bees, butterflies, and songbirds.

4.

**From *The New Farmer's Almanac*
*Word of the Day***

A flock of swallows is called a *gulp*.

5.

**From “*Man on Man*”
V.9: Eating Disorders**

Fringe and then even mainstream doctors began diagnosing cases of *logonausea*, the presenting symptoms of which ranged from an acidic or bitter taste in the mouth to trouble eating, torpor, swollen tongues, and even stomach ulcers and tumors.

Physicians tended first to consider such symptoms psychosomatic, then advised therapeutic periods of “verbal rest,” but finally began prescribing a new array of pharmaceuticals that softened the firing of Broca’s area, in the frontal lobe.

6.

**From *The New Farmer's Almanac*
*Puzzle of the Day***

Grow a gourd inside a glass bottle. A gourd that is bigger than the bottle’s neck.

Now, how do you get the gourd out of the bottle, without breaking the bottle or the gourd?

DOE

Genevieve Jencson

He was called man
and she was called girl.
They were the same age,
but it had to do
with displaced air
and negative space.

He was called a john
and she was called a doe.
When they found her
they tried to draw a line
around her body,
then someone noticed
the hooves and the fur.

Everyone was laughing.
How did they not see it before,
even when she was naked?

They took her to a forest,
and placed her at the base of an oak,
among the wet ferns, the exposed roots.

She would have been so happy
if she were breathing.

WAYFARER

Daniel Johnson

1.

The night we slept with our windows open,
we woke to yellow leaves littering the bedroom floor,
filling our wine cups, puddling brightly in our shoes.
Our room shone the color of an autumn swamp,
a slash of red where a boat moved off.

2.

We waited for you.

You crossed an expanse.
We charted your course.

You came by boat on a Tuesday.
Rather, you came by knife

and traveled light.
We waited for you

and you waited for us.
We called you Chance.

We call you Olanna.
You came on a Tuesday,

bright knife.

JISEI

Matthew Johnstone

Trees' grey.
Head
of shade
nod
its end
into
finish.

This first
descending is the middle,
temples elder &
paper.

Sleep has
your pieces of
at
which
this currency
of years flattens beneath

the same attentions, body.

City, & let so.

Face
of your
head of away as
the front of the body is
away. Show given.

Reckon an end contain
me still, change
fell. This nor, &
shapes
vasted
it ground.

Curled pollen out behind
horizon
blind &
holding the money
away
became glad with others.

Saw denim
scaffolding up the
skeleton,

will of the earth for more
earth.

How
unending
the bone shore fine,
here is
where is a finite we

hold the image

of a man holding
a smaller man upside down,
just

pouring
the hysterical body
out of, &
onto its
places.

Are you room
does
not home, I embrace

siblings that shade
a shade closing very
loosely
onto its own figure
the table around me,

Hands left in dreams,
as

in snow.

Traced only direction of
circle with ends

of an almost burning stick.

The still, specific, & saying be
vacated for.

Fold, terrible canopy
flow
a sun that
earths some glass
between us
please,
lean away
each others' temple scald.

Face is the one spreading
shadow
from its middle. *Un*face.

The only responsibility of
blue

is now the
red,

an island has a long
line of us
a beach, of something.

Here only is good.

NO SYNTHETICS HAVE THE COMPRESSED LOOK OF JAGGED UNEARTHED MATERIALS

Ginger Ko

Money provoked
strength, so they
grew strong, amassed
in the abstract
small wet pellets
and crowded
them together
in compartments.
Their shamans.
They don't understand
the image of
a small girl
in a bright red
hooded cape, but
they can understand
the significance
of her churning legs.
That her legs
are bare, cold
in the dark
of some woods,
we don't know
what they make
of that. Unlike

the bird fallen
on the cement,
head gyrating,
beak gargling,
my head is round
and refilled
and twists on with
pleasurable solidity.
I have a plump shiny
plait of memory.
She becomes
like a very small
doll, photographed
against a white space
that prints her
the size of a pinkie
fingernail. A cancer
once pinked
and pitted my breast
the way time pitted
the stone of those
ancient figurines.
We taught them
that in even
the most miniscule
separation of sand,
a path is revealed.
That in traveling
between the spark
and the ancient light
of the smallest star
we cannot

find objectivity.
And in this way
they determined that
there was one
consideration: *Why*
do you speak? To
be heard or to heal?
Some find it unbearable
that animals befriend
and willingly provide
for us. When an
animal king visits
with a gift, some
grab the stag's offering
with one hand and
with the other
kill him for cooking.
The bearer is
always a gift also

INHERIT FROM ME THE MOST PRIMITIVE RUIN: REPLICATION

She wept
while they plugged,
plugged, chastising
her for not
learning the intent.
When the ice
melted they found
a ring of dead
songbirds at
the base
of every tree.
They paced
continuously,
stuffing their
greased hands
into their sides
to recoat them.
The flowchart
that compresses
us all allows us
to foresee
the buckling
of livestock legs.
My accounts
hold the balance
of my suicide
attempts. She,
likewise, pulled

back on the neck
of her shirt and
revealed a shoulder
of ants. When
we failed to materialize
self-deception, tech-
perfection disappeared.
How do you
win at a game
that no one agrees
to play? If only
it involves the
satisfyingly hard
plastic balls
that bob
irrepressibly in the water.

*You are ill / I'm sorry
you hurt yourself. You are ill /
I'm sorry you hurt yourself.
You are ill if you hurt others.*

PARASITIC TWIN

Jennifer Kwon Dobbs

—after a sculpture by Dana Weiser

The headless blue / torsos compete for care
Conjoined / the northern one drains nourishment
from the southern one / lithe and ambitious
all grand gestures / Each imitates the other to exceed the other
in a race of arms / of legs extended / the south extended
curves the white riser in salute / Its thin left calf strains
to stake more space / The north's left foot placed
flat hard to see how / from an aerial distance
What about the hands / for whom / do they reach?

Behold your miraculous body—decapitated, all affect

Catherine, Sujin, Young Mee, case #1314—which one

limbed eight times, ribcaged twice and fed by stroking

shall neck, jaw, tongue, and teeth? Nose, eyes, don't forget

the fatty joints, abdominal muscles strengthened by names

electrodes positioned at meridians to trigger soul

massaged into the loved parts prepared for separation.

must be dry, must be ... or too much scraping causes

Hold the starved one who refused to wither though

lost sensation. As she sings, the goal is to soften

nameless, sexless. Why must being require cutting?

resistance but not prevent a command of movement.

Can't cleave Kwon Young Mee for whom Kim Dongji organized a Pyeongyang birthday feast. Can't cleave Kwon Young Mee teaching the northern orphanage nurse the southern word 입양인. Can't cleave Kwon Young Mee's hands stained with the ash of martyrs who the Americans incinerated inside the hospital's basement. Can't cleave Kwon Young Mee's skepticism, her despair at the southern DMZ's tourist buffets and pastel rollercoasters, her memory of Gaesong cornfields and a bus of Greek tourists. Can't cleave Kwon Young Mee singing "Uri Hana" chorused by Kim Chaek University students. Can't cleave Kwon Young Mee's legs as she paces the conference room, her adoption papers spread across the varnished table. Can't cleave Kwon Young Mee, Omma, as the guides read my documents for a map to find you.

KUMGANGSAN RESORT, GANGWON-DO, NORTHERN KOREA

Post-reunion, after the cameras shut off and the crew retreats to smoke cigarettes, the families split apart. Inside the banquet room, they reassemble north and south to gossip about each other. The southerners rub their gold cross necklaces and grumble about the northerners praising Kim Jong Un for the gift of their meeting. The northerners shake blue jars of bulk vitamins, the size of government cheddar, and speculate if their rich relatives mean to shame them.

A Red Cross worker asks a halmoni sitting alone if she regrets reuniting with her oppa wheeled in on a gurney. His dying wish: To apologize for his capture when as a child he picked scrap metal near the enemy's encampment to sell for food. The halmoni sighs and grimaces. The Red Cross worker flips open his smartphone and offers her the SK-NK translator.

Look again at the livid / form striving to live / without a twin
Fused it's more / vital / more present
than if the sculptor severed one from one / Why does freedom
require a death and a life / to create a self
who will need a story / how her newborn body
was taken apart / fashioned into a she?
Made from loss / she understands the making
tears one body from a host / Her urge to see
that rupture is not a romance but a reckoning with power
that could have discarded / could have / reshaped it
into an it / into a him

He reunited with knives, paper skins
peeled and piled on a confetti countertop,
crushed garlic, bowls of rice and cooked blood,
his omma cleaning casings to stuff a slack coil,
an earthenware jar of spoiled beans
that his omma insisted was his favorite food.
먹어먹어 his omma poked a fingerful inside his cheek,
and he collapsed on the kitchen floor from the taste
as his adopted body rejected
the fermented paste while another birthed itself
insatiable on his hip. It nubbed into a boil
his omma coaxed open with the choicest beef.
It hardened a mouth. Determined
it leached calcium and drained lymph
while hair patterned its crown. As he watched
the vanished twin return legible and lipped

soon to demand a plate, he plotted
how to reabsorb it before it gained a face.

1000 GRANDMAS

John Maradik

is a game
where you walk in on one
I was lonely
I walked in on one
she was trying to leave
her hair fell
like a silver curtain
her leg was cracking
I reached for her
but she wouldn't stop
I tried to snap a picture
she was like a pigeon in flight
someone told me
she escaped over the mountains
she was going fast
I don't know how many are left

I AM THE KING

only smaller

no, smaller than that

smaller still

D'INTERNET

I get all my food there
my decorative Scandinavian rock
my job
dear jeez/jeeves
I can't sleep
I've got D'Internet
humans crawled from the sea
millions of years ago
up the muddy slope
into the chocolate pudding
looking for D'Internet
history was nothing but people
doing loud things
next to the woods
looking for a place to put D'Internet
staring at books for ages
expecting to see D'Internet
but books are ludicrously flat
their pages flap stupidly
their sad weight
those dumb ruins
all that dumb art
boredom burned like a fever
people just sat there
had long wars or
drooled into their hands
before D'Internet emerged
from the muck things
a huge shining mirror
a deep well of water
people saw it and began to cry

THERE'S A HOLE IN THE BUCKET

Sabrina Orah Mark

I look at the bucket. There is unquestionably a hole. An entire family could live in this hole. "I see the hole," I yell. "Call Mendelssohn." My husband, Dear Henry, calls Mendelssohn. Mendelssohn comes right over. We look at the bucket. There is a hole. Mendelssohn studies it. He takes some notes. The southernmost edge of the hole is silent, possibly frozen. The northernmost, rough and forgotten. Mendelssohn sniffs it. "Smells like gone," he says, "just as I thought." Mendelssohn cups his ear, listens to its center, and jots down: "A slight trace of harp. The bare cry of a faraway boy." "With what shall we," asks Dear Henry, "fix it?" The flower in Dear Henry's breast pocket is a pink I've never seen before. "Lean close," says Mendelssohn. We lean close. "This is going to be a nightmare." Dear Henry and I nod our heads. We know already we will need to fetch the water with a bucket to fix the hole but we will have no bucket to fetch the water to fix the hole because the bucket with which we would fetch the water has a hole. A white balloon wafts over Dear Henry's head. We are failing miserably. "With what," asks Dear Henry, shall we fix it?" He asks again because even though we know how everything ends, the ending remains unimaginable. "With straw," says Mendelssohn, hopelessly. "With straw, I guess," says Mendelssohn again. I look around for straw. Dear Henry opens a can of sardines. He pulls back the tin lid and offers me one. "No thanks," I say. "Looking for straw," I say. He offers a sardine to Mendelssohn. "Why not," shrugs Mendelssohn. "Sardines are caught mainly at night," says Dear Henry. "I know," says Mendelssohn, chewing slowly on the fish. "They are caught when they rise to the surface to feed on plankton," says Dear Henry. "This is when they're caught," says Dear Henry. "They're caught at night when they're the hungriest." "I know," says Mendelssohn. "Everybody knows." "Except, I guess, for the sardines," says Dear Henry. Mendelssohn laughs. "It's

not a joke," says Dear Henry. "Sorry," says Mendelssohn. "I'm sorry too," says Dear Henry. "For what?" asks Mendelssohn. "Just for everything," says Dear Henry. "The bucket, and the hole, and just everything." Even though I am certain when I find the straw the straw will be too long and I will need to cut the straw with an axe but the axe will be too dull and I will need to sharpen the ax with a stone but the stone will be too dry and with a hole in the bucket there is no hope for ever fetching water to wet the stone, I am nevertheless still looking around for straw. This is the song we're in. I hate this bucket. "I hate this bucket," I yell. "More than the hole?" asks Dear Henry. He looks so sad. "The hole is the hole that the hole should be. It's the bucket that's destroying us, Dear Henry. It's the bucket." I look at Mendelssohn. I mean I really look at him. Every day he looks more and more like my mother. "With what shall we fix it, Mendelssohn?" I am exhausted. How many times can a person ask the same question? Mendelssohn kneels gently beside the bucket and reaches all the way in. His dark soft curls cover his eyes. "Liza," says Dear Henry, grabbing my arm, "I think we're dying." With a stone in his hand, Mendelssohn reaches all the way into the bucket, past the hole, past God, and summer, and almonds, and shame, and the ocean, and mice, and love, and fevers, and worship, and snails, and teeth, and lilac, and forgiveness, and a song about a bucket with a hole in it, and past all the children singing the song, and past their children singing it, and their children's children, and past my broken heart until he reaches the oldest water and wets the stone. He pulls the stone out and sets it right on top of Dear Henry's head as if Dear Henry were a tombstone and I've come to his grave to mourn him. The wet stone glistens so brightly I need to cover my eyes. "With what," asks Dear Henry, shall we..." I can barely hear him. The song is fading like a song. It is what it is. I remove the wet stone from the top of Dear Henry's head and bury it in my pocket. I notice the crack on Dear Henry's cheek shaped like a bucket is spreading. There's a hole in that bucket too. I look over at Mendelssohn. He is building a whole entire city out of buckets. "There are holes in all of these," says Mendelssohn who is

now covered in holes under a sky covered in holes lit by a moon covered in holes kept by prayers covered in holes. Off in the distance, I can already see the people coming to live in Mendelssohn's City of Holes. There are so many people, and they are so beautiful and hopeful. And they too are covered in holes. They each carry a bucket. And in each bucket is a hole. This is the song we're in.

FOURTEEN

Maria Martin

I knew I was shrinking because nobody could hear me. I was looking for someone to be my new dad. All the dads were looking for something else. In the evenings my mother came and tucked me into her car. The trees sped up as we reached them. That year, people were waiting for a shoe to drop. Then the shoe dropped, so they began to go about their business. A man raked some leaves into a pile. A man said what he'd meant all along. A man found a cup that had rolled under the couch. And yes, I lived in that cup.

WHAT A LADY NEEDS

It is unknown when the lady first arrived. We kept expecting someone to knock on the door and explain it to us. First we noticed little packets of stevia in odd places. There were unclaimed dots of toothpaste drying in the sink. She is much slyer than you may imagine. I finally caught her on the couch, and already I knew that I needed to feed her. She was a bit wilder then, and kicked furiously whenever I approached. I walked casually through the living room palming cubes of sugar that I knew she could see. I couldn't tell you when she began to eat out of my hand. Now and then, walking by, I'll catch her old, ferocious glint flashing in the hall mirror--then we laugh, ha-ha, do we laugh.

THE DRIFTWOOD HOUSE

Nathan Parker

the old man and woman
pulling the wagon through
the sand mean to erect
a large porch on which to
listen to the sea and
eat but this depends on
what the sea will provide
this month in the evening
they remove their kelp wigs
prop their elbows upon
a crooked bed and pray
for a shipwreck these are
quiet dignified people
a few children wash in
like portentous clouds

KIPLING'S BAR

Delia Pless

I do not know how to dream
and not make dreams my master,
the look of recognition from the sickly bridesmaid,
the crepe silhouette of the car
as it dissolved along the interstate.

Even your face which looms from every napkin in this bar
has the tattered expression I've come to associate
with the face of one who can't say
exactly how it is they got here. Rudyard

Kipling. It's late.
Hospital floors reflect the pale shoes of a student nurse,
she's fallen asleep holding someone else's baby.

The stars are another story whose plot I only half-knew
abandoned to some unassigned cubby
where they waited, waited for a night like this
to draw them from flawed depths
and shudder into being. Christ, so you don't remember?

GUEST OF HONOR

So the Admiral wasn't everything you'd hoped.

So he ashed his cigarettes rakishly into a conch shell.

So he said his sandals were computers.

So he had a sticker in his beard.

Oh well.

It's still a perfect September evening.

The yard smells like shampoo and grass
and fireflies are dancing the dance of the deranged
like rubies buried inside a clock mechanism.

Apropos of rosemary I'll say have you seen the garden?
Are you proposing to me? you'll say
and let the words hold their own miniature sadness for a while.

LAPIS LAZULI

My mother applies makeup in her sleep.

Sometimes I'll wake up at two, three in the morning
and find her in the bathroom leaning over the counter,
hard black pallets scattered everywhere like dice.

Because she doesn't own it she doesn't wear it or it would be
the other way around, I suppose.
A little chapstick if it's winter.

But unconsciousness tends to the vivid squares
and satellite eyes, and copperhead venom
a cream that warms on contact

lashes that aren't strictly speaking hers

and when she's done she looks like a narcotized Dolly Parton.
If you knew how little time we spend together
I think it would depress you too. And whose fault is that?

THE ACCIDENT

Fucking Christ someone said
then I was on the Maple Street Pond
where beads of mercury and titanium panels
and what looked like a lawnmower engine
stamped with the military seal of my country
had spilled onto the ice.

The driver ran off in a wrinkle of footprints
leading to the exchange station
and a power line ticked against the cab
spewing cryptic threads of electricity
while out of his mind with shock
a man in orange waders
emerged from one of the fish houses
and started picking up the pieces
which he arranged carefully on the shore.

Therefore stumbling breathlessly
into this pageant of gore,
I went to help recover the parts
of the machine I hated and feared.

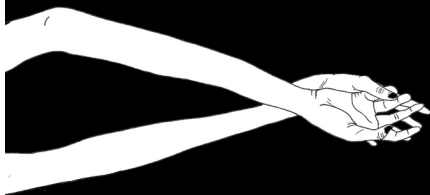
100 WORKS IN MILL ALUMINUM

Nina Puro

It was weather when you and who met.
You looked at culture and agreed difficulty.
It was set somewhere blurry-Western.
It was a volatile production.
It was a healthy injection.
It was a lengthy sensation.
It had a commanding presence.
Race, sexuality, class, and gender were not entirely unconsidered, but.
The incongruity was the humorous part.
The spontaneity kept it nimble.
A menu is sticky.
There was a generational disparity.
You and who purchase calories.
You consume them in proximal semi-public.
Who says it does not connote. The curation lags.
The aesthetic is of a mismanaged quorum.
You suggest intentional awkward heightening, then feel awkward.
You inquire on the progress of who's life event.
You agree the difficulty has usefully clarified your relational emotions.
Though as always it is hard to look at how close we are, societally, to an end.
Separation and transport occur.
Mid-liminality you're reviewing your dumbest moments.
Until you pass a tree full of wind chimes.
A block after you pass a tree full of lights.
Each produces an identical emotion.
Due to a reaction in your anterior insula.
In part *because* it is night. You have
at least three other senses. Perhaps more—

dimensions vary. Gross streets are empty
inside you. People miss their dead. They shove new
plastic bags into their bag of bags. You're beyond
changing. Yours is a country with a greedy
luminosity that wears out its lovers. A settee
beckons. Be somebody with a body. You squish
tick into smear. You pave a bumpy road
via fro-yo spoon. You send a wind chime out
invisibly. You do not deny anything.
Nothing recurs.

IMOGEN AND THE
BEGINNING OF COLOR
(AN EXCERPT)

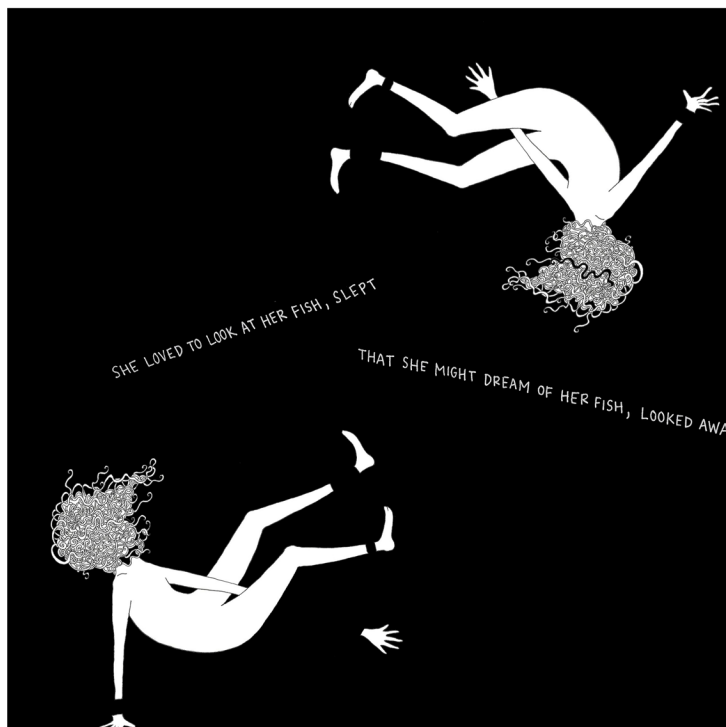


ART by GABRIELLE BATES
WORDS by ADRIENNE RAPHEL



IMOGEN HAD
A GLASS TANK
AND ONE FISH.



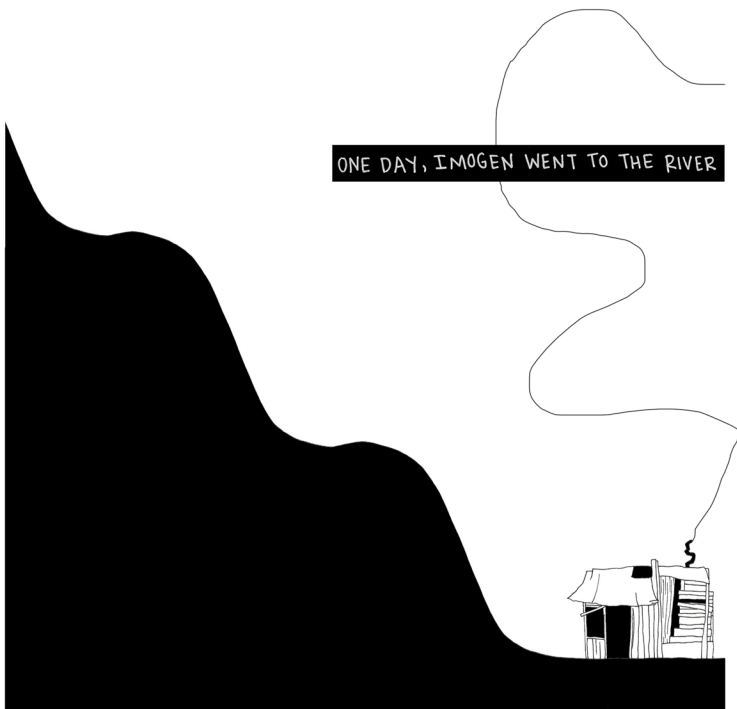


SHE LOVED TO LOOK AT HER FISH, SLEPT

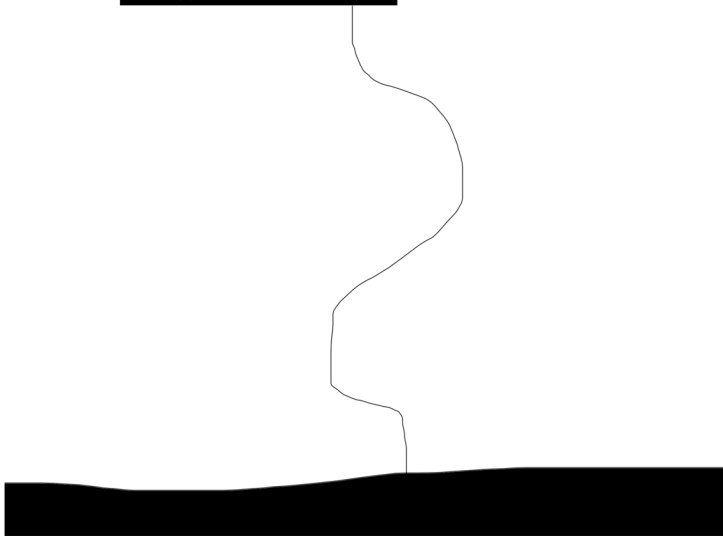
THAT SHE MIGHT DREAM OF HER FISH, LOOKED AWAY

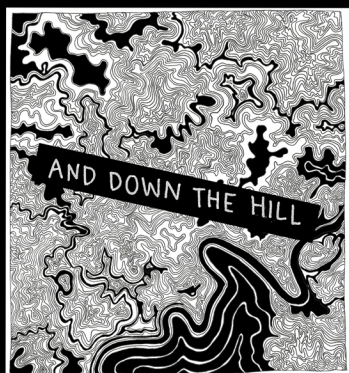
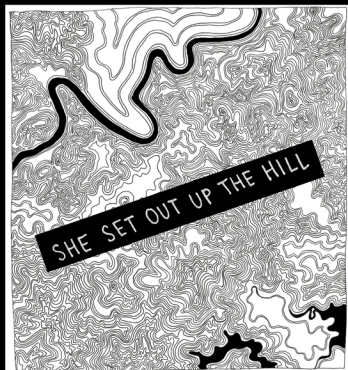
FOR THE BOUNDING PLEASURE OF SEEING IT AGAIN.

ONE DAY, IMOGEN WENT TO THE RIVER

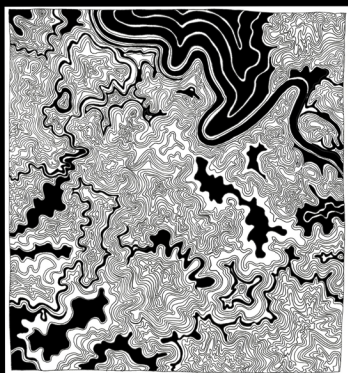
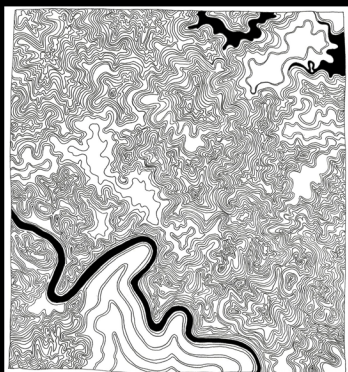


TO GATHER NEW WATER.

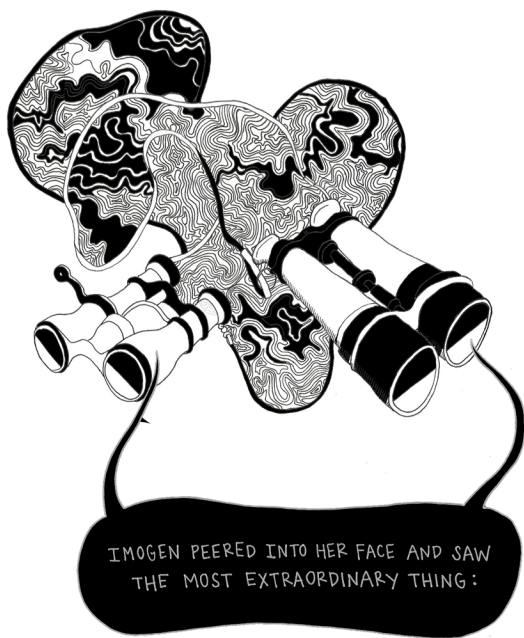




AND OVER THE FIELD



AND DOWN TO THE RIVER.



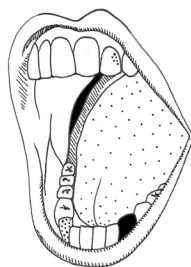


A FISH!

AS MARVELOUS AS HER OWN—

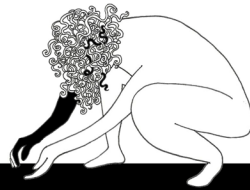


IN THE NEW FISH SWAM.

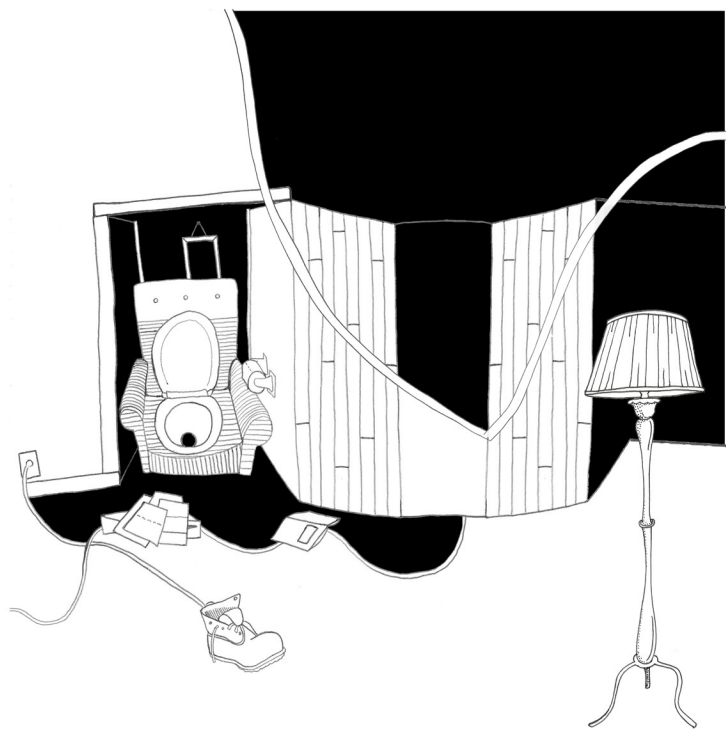


WHEN SHE POURED





THE NEW WATER IN WENT THE FISH INTO THE TANK





THE FISH CIRCLED THE FISH.

A circular arrangement of 18 stylized fish heads, each with a unique expression and pattern, set against a solid black background. The fish heads are arranged in a ring, with some facing left, some right, and some looking forward. The patterns on the fish heads include solid white, solid grey, and stippled grey. The text "IMOGEN GASPED" is centered within the circle.

IMOGEN GASPED



I WAS, OF COURSE

Jayme Ringleb

God once made me a raft of cedars,
rowed with me one night
past the clean, barbed reef until his back, from some old outrage,
gave out.
Beside the raft, plankton dizzied in a snaggle
of moonlight pinkened the sea, which otherwise seemed without
form. God grew
frightened and, as I retreated us to our
low island, said to me *Stay quiet*
and *Be mine*. There, with
the simple trees, I was, of course,
always quiet, I was
already his. But God felt stranded, and he commanded
I make the raft into fire. He sat, breaking cedar planks
in his hands
while I built the fire tall, taller than a man.
When my God stepped into it, he paused, reconsidering

me, and then steadied himself
as if boarding a small boat.

He said to me, *You know I loved you*. But love, I thought, was
wooden, simple:
whatever he wanted, that's what I was.

PARABLE

The newborn pig could not unfold its legs
and from its palate a cleft
ending between the eyes

blinded it. Some neighbor boys came
throwing stones they'd chosen
from the corn field, and later,

a farmhand drew a warm bath
to wash the small pig's cuts
and drowned it.

Before the farmhand came,
before the boys with
coat pockets fattened by stones,

another boy came, an older boy,
and beneath a brittle sycamore
set out sheets of newspaper.

He lay there with the pig on his chest
and took its hooves between his hands,
and he rubbed the hooves

as if the hooves were cold.
"You're like a cat," he said to the pig.
"You're like a sleeping dog," and

the pig, who may have wanted to believe
it was a cat, or a sleeping dog,

kissed the boy

with its split, damp nose.

The boy slept,

sometimes

waking to feel the four stones

of pig's feet, milk-warm and cleft.

The open-mouthed pig for a while slept too.

MORNING

Ardengo Soffici

The light is nothing but a delicate bouquet of flowers
The sky a buzzing of green and gold flies
If it weren't for this Parisian pardessus we could dance
There is music on every floor as in paradise
A woman wearing the colors of the flag in patriotic lithographs
Escapes towards the east
Jamais je ne voudrais être son chien!
Better to cry with tenderness
At the miracle of people who rise anew each day
In this universal enigma they grab an almanac
And move on
They move on with the calm of cattle
Ah! we will die for having loved trifles too much
The slick aniline air soaks me like a shirt dipped in laundry blue
I see it all
The baccalà that samples Nirvana blossoming with tomatoes in sky-blue buckets
The shade of eaves lowered over the shutters' blue-green eyes
The shadows of men sinking
Into the transparent land
And suddenly I understand this axiom: Every new civilization is born
from the laughter of children
The drum of the sun beats on the barber's mirror
To make me smile
No choice but to chase the cool hours of morning in silence

(My hair is a disaster!)

Translated by Olivia E. Sears

FROM JAR TO JAR

Cary Stough

I could see

the drawing underwater

being poured

into the rind
of a cantaloupe's face

~

I could see

the jar of dachshunds' tails

being poured

into the jar of dachshunds' tails

PROPHET

we knotted
folding
anyhow we

fielded
burning
in an ear

four months ago
we farmed

dawnfurrows

of our blossoming
obsessions

we tried the well

for it had been
forespoken

for it had been

for it had been

for it had been fore-
spoken

INVOLUNTARY SINS

Larisa Svirsky

Don't talk about why you are here in the event it might offend the
others

You can have things that are a little bit dangerous but not very
dangerous

The pond on our grounds is for swimming, not drowning

You can take the bus somewhere else if you plan to do that

You need to sign this piece of paper saying you consent to be treated
as though you're not capable of consenting to be treated any way at all
If visitors come and bring you sweets, you should share them with your
friends here

Sometimes they like it if you recite things that you've memorized
Sometimes they just rock themselves to sleep despite their advanced
age

You should plan to maintain at least a minimal standard of hygiene

In fact it is required although legally I can't make you

Everyone here has survived something that's not supposed to happen to
anyone

Everyone in the right circumstances could earn an unmarked grave

You will spend your afternoons filling out menus for meals you will
have in future days

You should request butter if you want peanut butter

You can have your books, but only if they aren't heavy

I mean if they are paperback

The only way we can help you is if you disclose yourself to us

I know there are a lot of things that brought you here that you should
let go of

That's a good girl, tears are just salt water leaving the body

It's a good idea to keep a journal in which you record your time here

but you need to return the pens to the front desk after you're done
Your family should be here sooner or later
Sometimes the others write letters but never send them
It's only the letters that help
You can also make friendship bracelets for you and your friends
We will periodically search your room for food items
If there's something you really like, you can color a picture of it
Some of the others have been saying strange things lately
It must be some kind of code
Sometimes we watch you wipe down the tables
We want to make sure you're ready for what awaits you
You will sometimes have to stand in line for your medication
You don't need anything that is hard to find
You may experience excessive sedation
and may watch others with paperclips, staples, childproof scissors, their
hands
You will prize and forfeit those things in quick succession
You will pity your past self
One of the others was found with a plastic bag wrapped around his
head
But when we got it off we realized he was alright
No one here chooses representation
You are past the point of symbols
You are crossing a bridge you were on the wrong side of a long time
without realizing
You are blind but one day you might not be
You can hope for that, anything
You can exchange a nub of chocolate for a story about a fifty foot
parachute cord
We took that away from him too
But we gave him a newfound lease on life
And that is a real gift

You can read your paperback books and move just a little
You will be willing to do anything to leave
Our aim is to get you to leave behind your troubles
But you have left without a trace
And we don't know what you have given us

DELIRIUM

I am broken like a fever is broken

I hear people speak reverently about cruelty

and am aware vaguely that I am supposed to feel something

If I could be sure that I was made for this world

then I would let it in

Instead I cry crocodile onion tears

unable to make the genuine article

sad as a robin's nest in this unseasonably warm January

If I were an egg, I'd be blue

and broken like a fever is broken

slowly at first

I spent my school days in the library

immobilized and looking for safety

I read about scarlet fever

and other diseases long-dead people had

I learned why sunshine is bad for scars
and how skin could look like stitches
I learned what I wanted
but could not ask for
I learned I was broken
but not how

FICTIONAL CHARACTER

I lay quietly in the bathtub running hot water over my wrists
trying to steam my bones
One of my favorite movies had a scene just like this
although the character wore a full face of make-up
even while the rest of her was clean and her fingertips shriveled like
prunes

My mom strongly encouraged me to watch a British murder mystery
and the key to understanding whodunit was
the murderer had no fingerprints and so could not have been the
victim's son —
that was his motive
It's funny because usually fingerprints are used to catch criminals
but this time it was the lack thereof

Someone once said to me that maybe it was hard to understand my
childhood well
because there were ways in which it was full of absence
I smiled at the contradiction in that phrase but I said no,
I understand how if you need something, its absence is a problem
You'd have to expend a lot of energy pretending it was there
It would get very tiresome erasing the fiction out of your story for a
select audience
You would get tired of people who thought they'd figured you out

Maybe it was never the absence that bothered me but the question of
what I needed
I would like it if that question never had to arise,
if I could wade through my life in silence
I hear there's this lizard in South America that walks on water

I think they walk so quickly that their movements are always quiet
It's part of the natural order of things that they don't leave footprints
I keep searching for a law that entails that same kind of movement,
so perfect that some might call it a miracle

LETTERS TO AN IMAGINARY FRIEND

Dear so and so
I think I will get strong here
The food is hearty and soon I will be too

Dear so and so
I climbed a mountain yesterday with my fingernails as grips
There's a better word for them but I forgot it

Dear so and so
Today I feel the pressure of speech
the hours are getting away from me and so is my mind

Dear so and so
In your last letter you asked, how is this possible?
and I said, that's a good question

BECAUSE

Lately I've been drowning in dreams of human bodies
belonging to the people I know
In those dreams, my eyes twitch
and people I've never met
ask me to vouch for them to their employers

My dream brain is so gullible
I mean, no one would ask me for that in real life
but while the frontal lobe's away
the lizard brain will play
and play it does, with other lizards
and their brains

Yeah, that's gross
but so are dreams
One time I dreamed a friend of mine
got in trouble because people at his school
had racist Halloween costumes
which are lately an everyday occurrence
so not much lizardry is required

I wonder if my brain is secretly
a little man with a long name
who hides behind a curtain
People will take epic journeys
that involve displays of virtue
and striped tights sticking out from under houses
They will sing and teach themselves to be better people
We should all aspire to such greatness

What could surrender with such purpose and not be sweet? 1/17/15
In the body, where everything has a price,

I was a beggar. Thru the keyhole, I watched ~~the~~ ^{the} water
turn to sparks ~~at~~ ^{off} my father's back. Storm riding to seize his face
I taught myself how to sing — but then lost my way back.

~~When~~ ^{in the room} the rain fell through ^{his} me, I never questioned its sweetness,
that to fall with ~~that~~ ^{the sharpness} kind of purpose, would do nothing
but sweeten.

~~Because~~ ^{Because} the song was there, because ~~it~~ ^{it} seeped through the doors
trespass, I stepped into it. I let it fill me to the core...
All I ever wanted was to be a star's width of warmth
on a warm man's back.

~~I ask for too much just to feed my mouth and flow.~~

~~In cities~~ ^{in cities} thrabbs with charbells, I entered a sideways room
like a sound chasing the echo.

~~Let~~ ^{Let} the song fill me to the core, like a skeleton —
is melody hardens into a marrowed spine.

~~Sometimes~~ ^{Sometimes} how I dance
~~you can dance~~ — even if meant breaking your legs, even
is my name treaded down inside me, asks to be spart
~~In~~ ^{In} the body, where everything has a price I was ~~your~~ ^{your} son.
~~father~~ I didn't know there ~~was~~ ^{was} a better reason. That,
simplified of the world — but not your ^{voice} ~~voice~~, I would
show so beautiful, ~~I~~ ^{my father} would have no choice...

LUSH JOLTS OF JOY THROUGH THE MALLEABLE GLASS OF LANGUAGE: AN INTERVIEW WITH OCEAN VUONG

Poet and essayist Ocean Vuong is the author of *Night Sky with Exit Wounds*, which was recognized with the Whiting Award, the Thom Gunn Award, and the Forward Prize for Best First Collection. Vuong is a Ruth Lilly fellow, and his honors include fellowships from the Lannan Foundation, the Civitella Ranieri Foundation, Elizabeth George Foundation, and The Academy of American Poets.

In the summer of 2017, Vuong joined *jubilat*'s Amanda Dahill-Moore for this interview, conducted across the span of several months, over email. The same generosity of vision that characterizes Vuong's poetry opened an expansive space for dialogue. In a conversation that ranged from reflections on process to discussions of the lyric form, from the Palazzo Real in Milan to croissants in Philadelphia, Vuong again and again returned our attention to connections between and among seemingly divergent things. Through these observations, vast and intricate kinships were briefly illuminated.

JUBILAT: *Let's begin by discussing the somatic experience of writing. How do you locate yourself physically when you write?*

OCEAN VUONG: Writing, to me, is nearly entirely somatic. That is, I create best when moving my body, my time at the desk being merely the final summation of that movement enacted through a syntax, language, and sound that, hopefully, culminates into some sort of meaning. I think of Dante, who wrote most of his *Divine Comedy* during his evening walks

(Mistake Sky)
Manuscript Notes

~~glaze~~
~~torch~~

✓ Use: wreck;

✓ Check for repeating language.

~~man~~ ~~Light~~ - ~~Forgive~~
~~name~~ ~~Silence~~ - ~~and~~
~~hands~~ ~~Brightness~~ - Sky
~~music~~ Hunger - Beautiful - ~~music~~

✓ Check for vague language

~~Make something out of words~~

✓ Colors

✓ Stop when changes are minor.

✓ "When I learned how to stop - I learned how to continue." - Jen Bervin

✓ Add questions (isolated stanzas)

✓ Add Strange/unique verbs.

- Shrapneled - rainbowed
- hexacombed - ~~cupping~~

✓ ~~Add an intimate "you"~~

✓ ~~Add brief legs out of narrative.~~

~~The moment like an autumn field
fills with snow."~~

in various cities in Italy while in exile. Similarly, my best lines, images or phrases come to me during walks, riding my bike, in the shower, doing dishes, watering a plant.

But also, the idea of language (and its composition) being rooted in the body comes from the oral tradition of my family. Culling from a long and ancient agrarian lineage of storytelling, my mother, aunts, and grandmother, the women who raised me, surrounded me with language, songs, poems—none of which they composed by pen and paper, but through holding the words inside them as they worked, lived, and moved. These first teachers showed me that poetry and literature are a mobile technology, i.e., no matter how far one is from one's origin, as long as one is alive, poetry is possible.

It's interesting to me that you chose Dante to illustrate a physical process of composition. So much of your book, Night Sky with Exit Wounds, contends with the ways that individual bodies carry (and enact) the impressions which live inside us in the wake of violent histories. Is the concept of exile meaningful to you?

I am always thinking of Dante. His work and the context of his writing the Comedies both haunt and amplify my imagination on what a creative text can achieve when charged with an idiosyncratic political vision. Further, the fact that the Comedies are, essentially, a story of personal loss, love, and grief, is often overshadowed by the searing political call-outs and their resulting depictions of punishment. To me, the epic confronts what we, as writers, still face today, both on the level of craft and conceit—and it's that a creative work is strongest when it permissions itself the complications of its contemporaneous histories.

In terms of exile—I feel, as an American, that the word should always be on our minds, in our imaginations. Our country, as we know it, has never been invaded, our capitals never disposed. However, exile and displacement

A Little Closer to The Edge

He takes her hand & they step inside
the bomb crater. ~~Two silhouettes~~
~~pulled into moon bruised~~
~~earth.~~ All around them the crickets.
~~Saigon a single eye beyond the road swept blue~~
~~with heat.~~ The dead have already risen
in the season's greenest shoots. ~~Shall I.~~ ~~Yashit~~
Her ~~purple~~ dress a shade of dusk
peeling. He steps behind her, ~~and~~ ~~eliminating~~ ~~eliminating~~ the dark between them.
& once more, I am the headless snake coiled
at their ankles. My slick wound reflecting
their silvered limbs.

Dust fisted behind
~~my shifting, I watch~~
as her forehead sequins with sweat. Her face a sheet
 smoothed from a single lilac, *joked with sweat.*
 How his faux-Rolux dims,
 like a miniature moon, behind her hair.
 In two weeks it will break
 its seconds against her cheek—a shatter of stars •
~~He will pick away with promises:~~
~~a ring, a house America...Mother~~ *Mother,*
 teach me how to hold a man the way thirst
 holds water.
 Unhook your hips & ~~let me~~ *show* see how ruin
~~may we be~~ *lucky enough* makes a home. *It does,*
~~Show me how to fuck~~
 as hard as we fall. How a kiss
 hits the body
 like a season.
~~& to love by shattering~~
 into all the pieces
 the skin can hold.

the skin can hold.

Show me how to ~~be~~ dance
May I be so lucky
to ~~be~~ as hard as ~~you~~ felt.
May I be so lucky / to ~~be~~ never know
the ground.

have been major and perpetual parts of our history (and therefore our current lives)—slavery, Native genocide/conquest, Japanese-American internment camps. And these are only the ones that have occurred on our soil. In this sense, exile is always on my mind. Although, because I have never experienced exile, at least not in the geopolitical and Danteian terms mentioned above, I cannot claim that experience as my own—but only hold it in my psyche as a condition of our human lineage. And as an artist working within that tradition, I feel compelled to respond to it, just as I do to joy, laughter, loss, language, and violence.

Does the term exile, abstract or literal, determine your work at all? In the poem you shared with me last spring, I sensed an undercurrent of a species-wide exile, enacted with a clear-eyed restraint, a human aftermath that was so potent.

Yes, I feel that I can't be connected to the world I live in without confronting displacement. Your choice of words is evocative—it seems exactly like an undercurrent to me. Maybe it figures in my imagination as an undercurrent rather than the tide because I do not have an immediate experience of being dispossessed. But I feel and observe the emotional reverberations of—as you say—a species-wide exile, even in places and among people who do not bear its most direct and painful consequences.

Being guided by Dante in this conversation reminds me of Nathaniel Mackey, and his interest in jazz, who said “You know, in language we inherit the voices of the dead.” I wonder if there is something about bringing music to language that not only makes a covenant with the dead, but can also open the potential for an embodied opposition to the forces that would have us forget our histories—and the death and dispossession in that forgetting. I’m thinking of a couplet in your poem, “Eurydice”: Silly me. I thought love was real/& the body imaginary. Here I see you using a wry humor to insist on the physical experience of the body as necessary to animate love, which would otherwise be an abstraction.

Does the physicality which informs your writing process connect to your use of the lyric form? And how does this choice on the level of craft correspond to your understanding of our historic and political moment?

I love Nathaniel Mackey's layered and complex working of the political into, not only music, but also his reimagining of the epic, or longer poem, in *Splay Anthem*. I think, in both Mackey and Dante, and here I would add the work of Paul Celan and Claudia Rankine as well, the writers have vested their poems as a method of discovery but also of preservation, the alchemy of these two modes creating, to my mind, not only an inheritance but also a furthering of the dead, a momentous forwardness akin to the reproduction of DNA. Which is why the lyric is in itself a vital technology of the body's history, and therefore its politics.

Because of its shorter nature, the traditional lyric becomes portable, edited on the go, carried in the breath, the joints. In the oral tradition, the lyric becomes, at its height of purpose, a crowd sourced text, unwritten yet perpetually edited with each telling. This was how my grandmother told her stories and poems. When she spoke, we knew that what we were about to hear was an expertly distilled rendition, a version that has already survived all the other lesser tellings. The extraneous details long cut, the vital images made "luminous," as Pound would say. It was a work polished in the body, chartered across multiple continents. The lyric, in the mouth, then, becomes itself a survivor.

Your vision of the lyric poem is abundant. It seems to overflow the limits of its definition and speak to the potential of language as a force of renewal and identity, something that transforms us even as it shifts in form.

This makes me think about the fundamental power of language, which is always working on us regardless of whether we are conscious of it. In this time of social media inundations, when we are aware of tautologies and other rhetorical

evasions that seem to keep us transfixed and off-kilter in our public discourse, I have heard many people express concern for how language is being degraded by misuse, overuse, and falsity. Do you feel that language is something which can be debased? And if so, how do you combat its weariness or degradation, in your life and work?

I'm not sure if language can be so much debased—as transformed. The idea that language can be “debased” suggest a purity of standard that then must be protected, which makes me uneasy. If we look at the Middle English employed by Chaucer, for example, we see a drastically different English, one that is nearly unrecognizable to the modern speaker. To me, our contemporary English is the sum total of its evolution—which is neither bad nor good, but simply the result of momentous shifts through usage. In this sense, speech is one of the truest democratic modes we still possess, it being the closest idea of a “town square” in which each participant holds the power to change the language, even minutely, simply by using it.

In other words, regardless of how it is being employed or “debased,” used to divide and harm, each individual, when speaking, has the opportunity to claim usage for themselves—and since language is an act of communication, adds to the larger discourse. Even when we are speaking to a friend over lunch, we stand before this potentiality and get to choose language's function and where we will take it. I know this might sound a bit grandiose, but I think it's okay to take our usage seriously—especially when language is being used daily to manipulate us through ubiquitous political and commercial spectacles.

I was just in Milan a few weeks ago where I was offered a tour of the closed-off section of the Palazzo Reale, across from the Duomo. It was a section that was bombed by American air raids during Mussolini's reign in WWII. The Italians, in hopes of preserving the memory of violence, refused to refurbish it. The glass on the windows, some centuries old,

MS Notes 11

✓ remove "mirror"?

X "writing lessons": "Sometimes we call this the margins. Sometimes your thumb..."

~~3rd section:~~

~~1. Prayer 2. ode 3. Dancing
4. smallest 5. writing lessons~~

— Turn 1 Poem w/ News Column form

— "Delphic": "How did I get inside the Delphic? The delphic inside my words?"

~~X Let the fingers ignore the pulsing and pulse that this is the opposite of extraction.~~
code?

✓ use reached

— Remove "—" from colors, etc...

— black out section breaks
with white epigraphs

✓ remove "in Defense ..."

✓ add "the blizzard"

✓ add original opening to "Everyday"

— add references to ~~Walter~~ Milton,
Dickinson, Dyke,

~~"The Grass": two strands of hair
in a bowl of milk.~~

✓ "Lazarus": the cracks every syllable
oh god, spilling through.

[2nd to last poem in 195]

add "All that remains of the
sentence."

— cut weak lines from poems!
(see them individually!)

✓ switch place "skinny" endings with
7th circle. Remove "skinny"

had been warped by heat and time. Looking through it, the outside world where we had just come from was now unrecognizable. Language, to me, is like that glass—seemingly so solid yet perpetually bending, malleable, gyrating slowly under the weight and ruptures of time.

The question for the writer, then, is this: is this the window through which I would like to see the world? If not, then the agency returns to us, who must then fashion a new window, clearer, brighter, to peer through. That is, until that pane, too, begins to warp.

Ocean, thank you so much for sharing these thoughts, and through them, your expansive vision. This conversation has been so enlivening. I wonder if, to conclude, you could talk a little bit about one—or many—things, events, people, phenomena, works of art, that buoy or bolster your spirit.

A few years ago, while walking in Philadelphia, I encountered a curious sight beneath an old oak growing out of the sidewalk. At the base of the trunk was a pile of croissants, about 15 or so, dumped in the dirt. From my amateur judgment, they seemed to be the ones made by Dunkin' Donuts, but it's hard to say. In my curiosity to one, test the texture, and two, see if the croissants were hiding anything underneath, I moved a few of them about with the toe of my shoe. Finding nothing under the pile, I stepped hard on the croissant closest to me. For some strange, absurd reason I can't quite explain even now, a jolt of lush joy surged through me when the croissant gave, tore, the flakes grinding into the dirt. Within a span of three minutes, I found myself stepping on all of the croissants!

Looking back, I think what made that experience so pleasurable is also what makes art-making so pleasurable, when it works: that strangeness and absurdity, when enacted, often leads to discovery. Perhaps I relished in the act of stepping on something so decadent because the sensation was both rare and charged with agency, removing an object from its

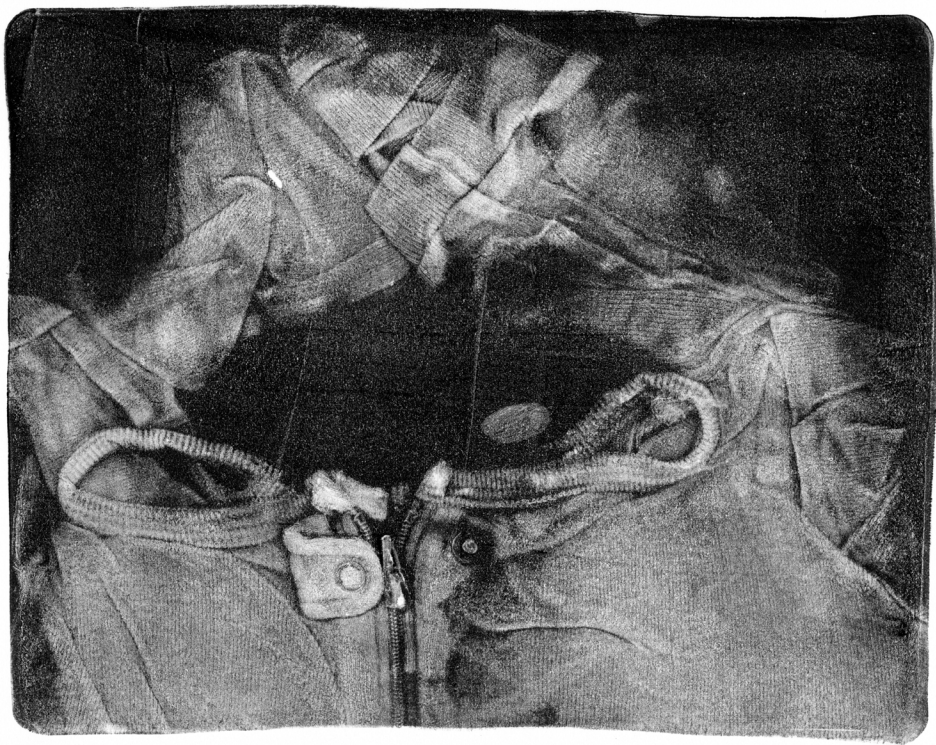
conventional meaning and interacting with it anew, with the body. It was not so much the stepping on croissants but rather the derangement of their context that made the act so startlingly joyful—which was not unlike the joys found in the derangement of language. I must have looked strange to those passing by, laughing out loud and stepping on the baked goods, but if anyone would have asked, I would have been absolutely prepared to answer them. I would have said: I'm a poet.

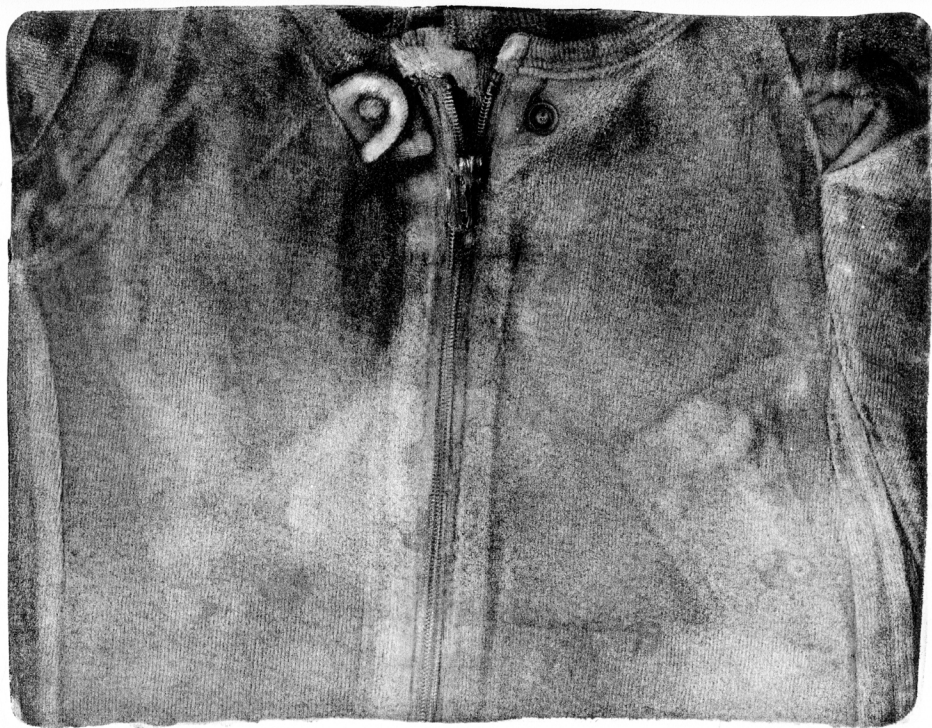
As a teacher, I often encourage my students to do the same, to find, in the midst of unimaginable worldly terrors, agency in joymaking, particularly in the mundane—which, from my experience, is actually full of meaning, surprises, and excitement. And croissants.

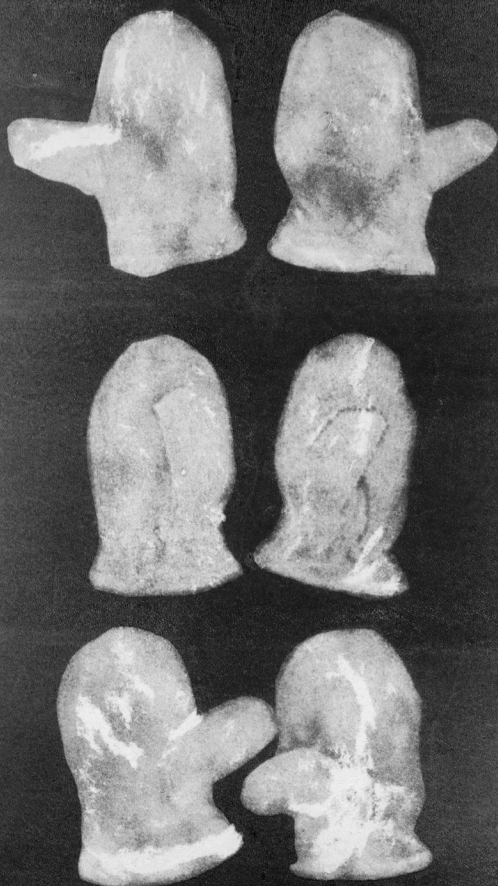
CLOTHES THAT ARE TOO SMALL
OR NO LONGER NEEDED

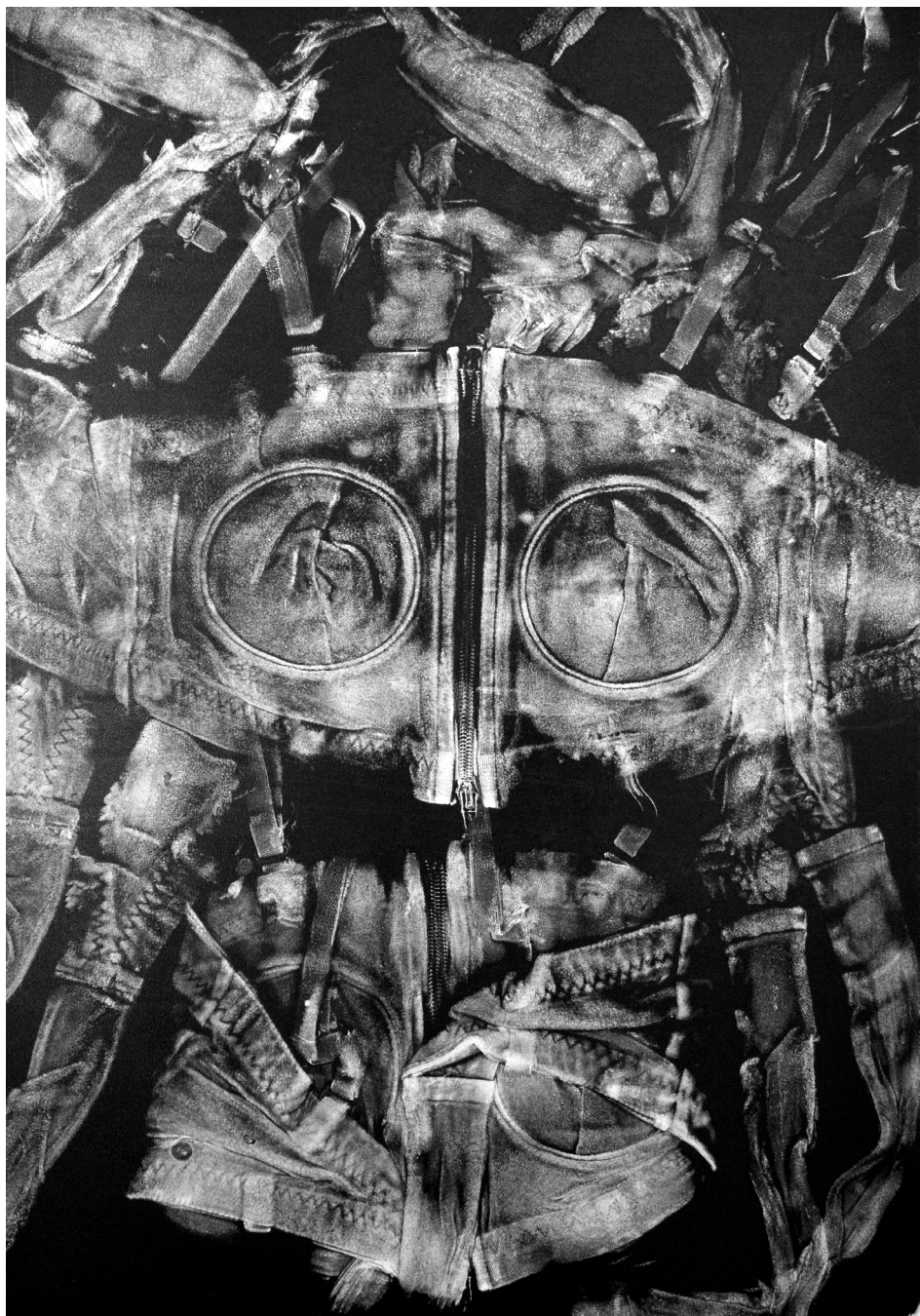
Esther S White











WHEN YOU DIED

Jane Wong

I went to the library to find you.
I stained a book on Maoist-era politics.
With the tomato soup I had microwaved earlier.
And it crusted the page like a ridge.
In the Grand Canyon or the surface of Mars in love.
Or an army uniform cratered.
In the blood of others.
I am sorry. I do not know which analogy.
To use, what to say to the fact of it all.
36 million deaths from 1958 to 1962.
Estimated. What no one talks.
About, called “epidemic,” not starvation.
At my grandmother’s grave in Jersey, the ground.
Was as soft as a perfectly poached egg.
And I almost plunged my arms into the soil.
To touch her – her purple jade bracelet shining.
Like the ring of an undiscovered planet.
Or a truant yam among all this empty clay. All.
This empty. I am sorry to give you.
That hope. I did not plunge my arms into the earth.
I held these Safeway flowers, dipped in bleach and blue.
These wrinkled petal faces, drifting in gasoline.
Air. This yawning gap between us all.
The more things change, what remains the same?

AFTER YOU LEFT

Jean Yoon

I died at the peak of my stardom

I slipped into a pleat in the wheat field

I considered shopping, then surgery

I wept into your turkey jerky silhouette

I married myself begrudgingly



August.

IT is now August, and the Sunne is some what towards his declination, yet such is his heat as hardeneth the soft clay, dries vp the standing ponds, wytheth the sappy leaues and scorcheth the skin of the naked : now beginne the Gleaners to follow the Corne Cart, and a little bread to a great deale of drinke makes the Trauailers dinner : the Melowne and the Cucumber is now in request : and Oyle and vineger giue attendance on the Sallet hearbes : the Alehouse is more frequented then the Tauerne, and a fresh Riuer is more comfortable then a fiery Furnace : the Bathe is now much visited by diseased bodies, and in the fayre Riuers, swimming is a sweet exercise : the Bow and the Bowle picke many a purse, and the Cockes with their heeles spurne away many a mans wealth : The Pipe and the Taber is now lustily set on worke, and the Lad and the Lasse will haue no lead on their heeles : the new Wheat makes the Gossips Cake, and the Bride Cup is caried aboute the heads of the whole Parish : the Furmenty pot welcomes home the Haruest cart, and the Garland of flowers crownes the Captaine of the Reapers. Oh, 'tis the merry time, wherein honest Neighbours make good cheere, and God is glorified in his blessings on the earth. In summe, for that I find, I thus conclude, I hold it the worlds welfare, and the earths Warming-pan. Farewell.

Appearances of Eternal Presence

I feel refreshed to read an ancient description of tart, green, crisp, summery food: “the Melowne and the Cucumber is now in request : and Oyle and vineger giue attendance on the Sallet hearbes.”

I feel like I’m falling into a 17th century Dutch still life, a splash of water not yet dried on a wooden board, crisp nuts spilling from a cone fashioned from that day’s newspaper.

Elsewhere in his “Fantasticks,” Nicholas Breton writes, “It is now December, and hee that walkes the streets, shall find durt on his shooes, Except hee goe all in bootes.” These “Fantasticks” are a set of descriptions of the months of the year, the seasons, holidays, and hours of the day. Each uses the present tense and a wealth of colons; each opens “It is now” and each closes in the same sweet way: “Farewell.”

So it is that Breton invites me into 1626, to find mud upon my shoes, dreaming of a plate of melon and cucumber and a salad dressed in vinegar and oil. Shopkeepers call to me—“What lacke you?”—while indoors maids work to set the lunch table, and the business of the city and countryside transacts in a dozen directions all around me: sweating lawyers argue for clients, soldiers return to a garrison, and, for the walking peddler, “the Aqua vitae Bottle sets his face on a fiery heat.”

I love how Breton encases and includes hardship in his descriptions—“the Bathe is now much visited by diseased bodies, and in the fayre Riuers, swimming is a swéet exercise.” He confers, with his attention, a feeling of gentleness and love. The world he describes is beautiful because it is full of life.

—EMILY BLUDWORTH DE BARRIOS

“Fantasticks: Seruing for a Perpetvall Prognostication.” was first published in London and printed [by Miles Flesher] for Francis Williams, 1626. This version is from Edinburgh, printed for private circulation, 1875.

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PLACES JUBILAT LIKES TO VISIT



CONDUIT has called its issues these names beginning with Premier Issue 28 issues ago; CONDUIT is published in Minneapolis, Minnesota and is edited by William D. Waltz, its magic and charm have never wavered since issue 1; on every cover it says *WORDS & VISIONS FOR MINDS ON FIRE*; in every issue it says *THE ONLY MAGAZINE THAT RISKS ANNIHILATION*; there's a friendly letters section, its contributors notes consist only of where the contributor currently lives; its pages are numbered with words, there is surprising art produced in generous color, there is prose, there is poetry,

there are editor's notes: over the years *CONDUIT* has published Russell Edson, Campbell McGrath, Noelle Kocot, Rae Armantrout, Oni Buchanan, Timothy Donnelly, Dobby Gibson, Henri Michaux, Geoffrey G. O'Brien, Rosamond Purcell, Cole Swensen, Lara Glenum, Eugenio Montejo, D.A. Powell, Charles Harper Webb, Jon Woodward, Dante Alghieri, Mary Jo Bang, Mark Bibbins, Amanda Ndelberg, Fred Schmalz, Bianca Stone, John Edgar Wideman, Terrence Winch, Daniel Borutsky, Kit Frick, Edward Hopper, Henri Michaux, Alice Notley, Matthew Rohrer, Tomáš Šalamun, Andy Warhol, Ai Weiwei, Rebecca Wolff, James Tate and many many more; it is tall and not so wide, beginning a little over 4 inches wide and almost 11 inches tall and growing over to its current size of 5 inches wide by 11 inches tall; *CONDUIT* interviews have included Rosamond Purcell, Daniel Clowes, Buzz Aldrin, Lewis Hyde, Mark Polizzotti, and more.

Here's a list in reverse order of appearance of the names of *CONDUIT*'s 28 issues:

- #28 Gut Feeling: The Intuition Issue (forthcoming)
- #27 Digging Lazarus: Reboot, Resurrect, Reimagine
- #26 Wonder: The Awesome Issue
- #25 Failing Famously
- #24 Supply & Demand: How Money Spends Us
- #23 Night Light: How the Moon Made Us Human
- #22 Deep Water: You, Me, and the Sea
- #21 Bodies in Motion: Dance, Sport, Momentum
- #20 Out the Door: Humans 'n Nature
- #19 Last Laugh: Black Humor in Deadpan Alley
- #18 Moving Images: Beyond the Silver Screen
- #17 Holy Hootenanny: Human Music
- #16 Book of Jobs: Work, Work, Work
- #15 Gray Matters: The Light and Shadow of Doubt
- #14 Dumb Luck: Fate, Fortune, Grace
- #13 Extinction: The Last Word
- #12 Neighborhood Gods: Modern Myth Making
- #11 Past Imperfect: The Trouble with Remembering and Forgetting
- #10 The Play Thing—Immaculately Rambunctious, Excessive, Exaggerated,
Uneconomical: Serious Fun
- #9 Big Bang: When Science & Poetry Collide
- #8 Lady Cop: The Beat Of Desire
- #7 Pedestrian: From Mundane To Mecca

- #6 Drunk Genius: Euphoria, Inebriation & Creativity
- #5 Alternative Mall
- #4 Le Grand Cliché
- #3 Hateful
- #2 Art Damaged
- #1 Premier issue

CONDUIT NO. 13 page numbers

8-track abacus Ajawa armiger balloon mail bluebuck camera lucida Cape lion
Chumash dodo elephant bird heath hen heliograph Homo erectus kinetoschope
Powhatan quill quipu reel-to-reel Sogoo stereopticon typewriter Tyrannosaurus rex
Ubykh Victrola Yaaku zoogyroscope

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anvil awl ball cock bit brace compass crank drill eyebolt file filter flywheel gas
match grapple hasp inclined plane key lathe mail nail punch needle pry pump
quern ripping bar sandpaper winch

CONDUIT NO. 23 page numbers

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equinox facula fluctus gamma ray halo ring impact libration magma ocean magnetic
field mass meteorite out space peaks of eternal light perigree pressure suit probe
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